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ISTORY · OF · THE · NAVY



EDGAR S. MACLAY

A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

VOLUME I


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The Bonhomme Richard and the Serapis (p. 113).

The bold headland of Flamborough is seen on the right. The force of the explosion on the *Serapis*' deck blew the British flag against the wind.

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A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES NAVY

FROM 1775 TO 1901

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BY

EDGAR STANTON MACLAY, A. M.

AUTHOR OF A HISTORY OF AMERICAN PRIVATEERS
REMINISCENCES OF THE OLD NAVY
EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM MACLAY
(U. S. Senator from Pennsylvania, 1789-1791)

WITH TECHNICAL REVISION BY
LIEUTENANT ROY CAMPBELL SMITH, U. S. N.

NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK AND LONDON
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1910

143 553
16/8/17

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Electrotyped and Printed
at the Appleton Press, U. S. A.

I DEDICATE THIS WORK TO MY FATHER,

THE REV. ROBERT SAMUEL MACLAY, D.D.,

IN RECOGNITION OF THE

LONG YEARS OF PATIENT TOIL AND SELF-DENIAL HE IMPOSED UPON HIMSELF

IN ORDER THAT I MIGHT RECEIVE A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

HE WAS THE PIONEER MISSIONARY OF THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CHINA AND JAPAN,

LABORING IN THE FORMER COUNTRY TWENTY-SIX YEARS,

AND IN THE LATTER FIFTEEN YEARS.

SINCE 1888 HE HAS BEEN PRESIDENT OF MACLAY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,

IN SAN FERNANDO, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

INTRODUCTION TO THIRD EDITION.

Our war with Spain has not only altered the map of the world, but it has materially enlarged the history of the United States navy. Not merely a few chapters, but an entire volume has been added, substantially changing the perspective in our naval history. In the present third edition of this work efforts have been made to do justice, not only to our wood and iron navies of the past, but to the later triumphs of our steel fleets. Many important changes, suggested by experience and later information, have been made in the text of Volumes I and II, so that it is believed the record of our navy from 1775 to 1866 as given in these two volumes is complete.

As has been said, the war with Spain has substantially enlarged the scope and altered the perspective of our naval history. From being a self-seeking, self-contained nation we have suddenly awakened to the fact that we are a world power; and possibly the most significant feature of this evolution is the wonderful maritime strength and adaptability for sea fighting we displayed in the war against Spain. It is the unexpected extension of our influence in the polity of the world that has made the record of our maritime achievements in the late war of supreme interest; and it is with this fact held steadfastly in mind that the present revision and enlargement of this work has been attempted.

As leading up to the Hispano-American War all chapters dealing with the decadence and rehabilitation

of the navy after the civil war have been transferred to Volume III. These chapters occupy fewer than forty pages, so that the balance of the volume of some five hundred pages is devoted to a complete record of the navy's doings in the war with Spain and subsequent incidents of international importance down to April, 1901. A complete preface dealing with the salient features of the Spanish war will be found in Volume III.

As the narrative in Volume III has been based solidly on American and Spanish official reports, it is believed to be accurate and complete. But what the author said in the first edition of this work (1894)—namely, "The study of the United States navy is far from being complete, and, impressed with this fact, I would gladly receive information from any reliable source bearing on our naval history, in order that it may be incorporated in future editions"—is repeated to-day.

E. S. M.

NEW YORK NAVY YARD,
April, 1901.

INTRODUCTION TO SECOND EDITION.

In the introduction to the first edition of this work the author said that he "will gladly receive information bearing on our navy from any reliable source, in order that it may be incorporated in future editions." This invitation has been responded to generously, so that with these additional details it is believed that this new and substantially enlarged edition is a complete narrative of our navy's career from the earliest records down to the intervention of the United States between Spain and Cuba.

Some of the most important additions are the chapters Cruising after Slavers, Attack on the *Wyoming*, and Sea Power in the Civil War. Some of the other material incorporated is an account of Commander (now Commodore) Schley's arctic relief expedition, the sequel to the sinking of the *Monitor*, a fuller account of the Apia disaster, the last appearance of the *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads, from material prepared for the author by Rear-Admiral Thomas Stowell Phelps, the latest developments in gun and ship building, an outline of the formation and development of our marine, medical and pay departments, an explanation of the Cuban complications, an account of the *Maine* disaster and our relations with Spain, and a description of the equipment and mobilization of the navy in the winter and spring of 1898 down to the beginning of war with Spain on April 21st. There are several new and typical pictures of vessels likely to be prominent in our naval operations.

Some interesting additions also have been made to the account of the *Bonhomme Richard-Serapis* fight, to the action between the *Constitution* and *Java*, to the cruise of the *Essex*, and to the torpedo warfare in the civil war, while the account of the tragedy in the *Somers* has been enlarged to several pages. Some of the most important services performed by the supply steamers *Rhode Island* and *Connecticut* and the sloop-of-war *Jamestown* have been noted. The list of ships has been revised and brought down to date, while the latest developments in naval warfare are recorded. The arrangement of chapters has been altered so as to end the War of 1812 with Volume I. The number of pages in each volume has been greatly increased.

It will be necessary to explain why some of the material offered does not appear in this new work. It has always been the author's intention to devote a separate volume to the story of our privateers. This seems appropriate, not only because they formed a distinct class of war ships, but because their services were of so great national importance and their actions in so many cases were of such remarkable brilliancy and attended with such "astounding audacity." For this reason the mass of exceedingly valuable and interesting material placed before the author by the descendants of our daring privateersmen does not appear in the history of the navy proper, but is reserved for a volume which will be uniform with the "History of the Navy," but will be published separately.

In the preparation of the final chapters of the War of 1812 the author desires to acknowledge his obligations to William J. Kyle, of Providence, R. I.; to Robert H. Hope, of Montreal, grandnephew of Captain Hope, who was first lieutenant in the British 38-gun frigate *Macedonian* when she fought the *United States;* to Richard Watson Gilder for interesting details of the last cruise of the *Constitution* in the War of 1812; to Theodore Roosevelt, author of The Naval

War of 1812; to H. Y. Powell, of London; to Judge William W. Carruth, of Boston; to Oliver Ormsby Page, of Allegheny, Pa., a relative of Captain Benjamin Page, U. S. N.; to Lieutenant-Commander William Bainbridge-Hoff, U. S. N.; to Samuel C. Clarke, of Marietta, Ga.; and to Mrs. Laura W. A. Cook, of Chicago, daughter of Captain Joel Abbot, U. S. N. In that part of the history extending from 1815 to 1860 the author is indebted to Joseph A. McCreery, of New Jersey, for the unpublished private journal of one of the officers who was in the frigate *Potomac* in the expedition against the Qualla Battoons in 1832; to William Elliot Griffis, author of the Life of Matthew Calbraith Perry; to Rear-Admiral Henry Walke, for interesting data on the Mexican War; to Edward Trenchard, son of Rear-Admiral Stephen Decatur Trenchard, for the private papers and unpublished journal of his father bearing on the interesting incidents in the China Sea in 1856-'59, and also on the civil war; to Franklin Eyre, of Philadelphia, great-grandson of the builder of the first United States war vessel; to Assistant-Engineer Henry Eckford Rhoades, who was in the United States war steamer *Juniata* in her *Polaris*-search expedition; and to S. C. Bigelow, of San Francisco.

In the chapters bearing on the civil war the author has received great assistance from Rear-Admiral James Edward Jouett and Rear-Admiral Thomas Holdup Stevens. Both of these officers have contributed many items of interest on the parts they took in the great strife, and have given their personal experiences in the famous battle of Mobile Bay. To Rear-Admiral Thomas Stowell Phelps the author is indebted for valuable material on the early naval operations in the Potomac, the surveying of Hatteras Inlet, and incidents attendant and consequent to the appearance of the *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads. Rear-Admiral Henry Walke has kindly read and corrected chapters on the

naval operations of the Western rivers, in which he participated, besides contributing many items of general interest on the navy. The invaluable assistance of Miss Susan G. Perkins, in laying before the author the letters and private papers of her brother, Captain George Hamilton Perkins, bearing on the part he took in the battles of New Orleans and Mobile Bay, is acknowledged. To Ensign Thomas Tingey Craven, grandson of Rear-Admiral Craven, the author is indebted for items concerning the admiral; to Madeline Vinton Dahlgren, widow of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren, for the private journal and letters written by the admiral during the civil war, and especially while he was in command of the National fleet off Charleston; to Judge Charles Cowley, of Lowell, Mass., author of Leaves from the Diary of a Lawyer Afloat and Ashore; to Frank W. Hackett, of Washington; and to Rear-Admiral John Henry Russell, for interesting material bearing on the civil war. The author also desires to acknowledge the assistance he has received from Lieutenant-Commander Pendleton Gaines Watmough, Rear-Admiral James Augustin Greer, Rear-Admiral George Eugene Belknap, Rear-Admiral Edmund R. Colhoun, Rear-Admiral Alexander Colden Rhind, Rear-Admiral John G. Walker, Commander Charles S. Sperry, Lieutenant-Commander Charles Belknap, Lieutenant-Commander Franklin Hanford, and from the able works of Rear-Admiral Daniel Ammen, Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan and Prof. James Russell Soley on the civil war.

In the preparation of this enlarged edition the author acknowledges his obligations to an advance chapter of Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan's "History of the Royal Navy of Great Britain"; to Mrs. D. McDougal Van Voorhis (daughter of Rear-Admiral David Stockton McDougal, U. S. N.) for valuable details of McDougal's gallant fight against the Japanese batteries in the Straits of Shimonoséki; to John C. Crowninshield for interesting items about the prominent part his an-

cestors took in the formation of the navy; to the late Pay Director Augustus H. Gilman, U. S. N., for his personal account of various incidents in the civil war; to William Elliot Griffis for an account of the *Wyoming* affair; to Mrs. Truxtun Craven Barnard; to Commodore Winfield Scott Schley, U. S. N., commanding the "Flying Squadron," for material bearing on the Greeley relief expedition; to Lieutenant-Commander James D. Jerrold Kelley's "History of the Navy"; to Commander Willard H. Brownson, U. S. N.; to Hunter Davidson, who managed the Confederate torpedo bureau during the civil war, for his personal account of those operations; to Medical Director George W. Woods, U. S. N., Surgeon-General William K. Van Reypen, U. S. N., and Surgeon James D. Gatewood, U. S. N., for interesting data bearing on the rise and development of the medical department of our navy; to the Rev. David H. Tribou, chaplain U. S. N.; to Pay Director Albert S. Kenny, U. S. N.; to Chief Engineer Edward Farmer, U. S. N.; and to Colonel Charles Heywood, colonel commandant of the Marine Corps, all of whom have contributed interesting data bearing on their several departments.

E. S. M.

OLD FIELD POINT,
SETAUKET, LONG ISLAND, N. Y.,
May, 1898.

INTRODUCTION.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the value of the services that have been rendered by the United States navy. The Continental cruisers and privateers—the latter corresponding to the militia on land—during the War of the Revolution captured about eight hundred vessels from the enemy, and, making the moderate allowance of fifteen men to each craft, we have a total of twelve thousand prisoners taken on the high seas by a maritime force which at no time consisted of more than five thousand men. About five hundred of these prisoners were soldiers of some of the best English regiments, and had they been captured on land the incident would have occupied many pages in our histories. It was by means of our maritime forces that the American armies were supplied with the munitions of war during that terrible struggle. In our two years of naval war with France the work was all done by the navy. About eighty vessels, mostly privateers, carrying over three thousand men, were captured from the enemy. Again, the wars with the States of Barbary were brought to a highly honorable termination by the unaided efforts of the navy, the United States securing privileges that had been denied to European powers.

The naval War of 1812 did more to humble the pride of Great Britain than any other contest. The Revolution was a struggle for independence on land, but it required a second fight to secure our "inalienable rights" on the high seas. Over fifteen hundred vessels were taken from the English, and more than twenty

thousand of their seamen were made prisoners. It was by means of her marine that England had attained her greatness, and it was on her naval supremacy that she depended for safety and prosperity. "Our maritime superiority," said the London Star, "is in fact a part of the law of nations. It is the right of conquerors, since men associated together in civilization, to give laws to the conquered." At the outbreak of the War of 1812 the British navy was in the zenith of its glory. It had matched its strength against the combined navies of the greatest maritime nations of the world, and had come off a victor. In two hundred actions between single ships it had been defeated but five times, and on those occasions the British ship is admitted to have been of inferior force. But in two and a half years of naval war with the United States British commerce was almost annihilated, and in eighteen naval engagements the royal navy sustained fifteen defeats; and this after the London Statesman of June 10, 1812, had said, "America certainly can not pretend to wage war with us; she has no navy to do it with."

The most serious aspect of this war, however, was not the number of ships engaged, but the astonishing disparity in losses. In the battle of Trafalgar Nelson's 100-gun flagship, the *Victory*, after five hours of fighting, sustained a loss of fifty-seven killed and one hundred and two wounded out of a complement of about six hundred men and boys. In the action between the 44-gun frigate *Constitution* and the 38-gun frigate *Java*, which lasted less than two hours, the English lost sixty killed and one hundred and one wounded out of a complement of four hundred and twenty-six, while the Americans had only nine killed and twenty-five wounded. In the battle of the Nile, in which there were twelve hours of hard fighting, the 74-gun ship of the line *Bellerophon* sustained the greatest loss on the British side, her casualties being forty-nine killed and

one hundred and forty-eight wounded out of a complement of five hundred and eighty-four. In the action between the 44-gun frigate *United States* and the 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*, which lasted an hour and a half, the English had thirty-six killed and sixty-eight wounded out of a complement of fewer than three hundred, while the Americans had only five killed and seven wounded. In the great naval engagement off Camperdown the 74-gun ship of the line *Monarch* sustained the heaviest losses on the side of the British. She had thirty-six killed and one hundred wounded out of a complement of five hundred and ninety-three. In the action between the 18-gun sloops of war *Wasp* and *Reindeer*, which lasted only nineteen minutes, the English had twenty-five killed and forty-two wounded. Next to the *Monarch*, the 64-gun ship of the line *Belliqueux* sustained the greatest loss in the Camperdown engagement, her casualties being twenty-five killed and seventy-eight wounded out of a complement of four hundred and eighty-five. In the action between the 44-gun frigate *Constitution* and the 38-gun frigate *Guerrière*, which lasted only forty minutes, the English lost fifteen killed and sixty-three wounded out of a complement of two hundred and sixty-three. The third English vessel at Camperdown in point of casualties was the 74-gun ship of the line *Powerful*, which had ten killed and seventy-eight wounded out of a complement of five hundred and eighty-four. In the action between the 18-gun sloops of war *Wasp* and *Frolic* the English had fifteen killed and forty-seven wounded out of a complement of one hundred and ten, while the *Wasp* had only five killed and five wounded. In the action between the 18-gun sloops of war *Hornet* and *Peacock*, which lasted but eleven minutes, the English had five killed and thirty-three wounded out of a complement of one hundred and thirty, while the American loss was only three men injured.

It will be seen from these figures that the naval War

of 1812, in proportion to the forces engaged and the losses sustained, was a contest of far greater moment and disastrous consequences to Great Britain than any in which she had been engaged, and it is not surprising that it "spread a degree of gloom over London that was most painful to observe." The London Times summed up the full significance of these actions, when it heard of the loss of the first frigate, in the following words: "The loss of a single frigate by us, it is true, is but a small one; when viewed as a part of the British navy it is almost nothing; yet under all the circumstances of the two countries to which the vessels belonged, we know not any calamity of twenty times its amount that might have been attended with more serious consequences to the worsted party." That the "Thunderer" was conscious of the increasing gravity of the war is seen when it heard of the capture of the second British frigate, and exclaimed: "In the name of God, what was done with this immense superiority of force! Oh, what a charm is hereby dissolved! The land spell of the French is broken [alluding to Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow], and so is our sea spell!" In these naval disasters intelligent Englishmen foresaw the subversion of their naval supremacy, and they well knew that if that were lost it meant the reduction of England to one of the least of the European powers.

Such being the seriousness of the subject from the English standpoint, we can readily understand why volume after volume has been written and every art of figure-juggling resorted to to explain away these defeats. One of the most popular methods of accounting for the British naval disasters of this war is that of comparing the ships engaged by means of tonnage. By this method English writers make out that the American frigates were from forty to fifty per cent larger than their antagonists. But tonnage, as determined in those days, by no means gives an accurate idea of the force of war ships. The system of measuring was to declare

that half of the breadth of the vessel at the broadest part was to be considered the depth. Three fifths of the breadth was to be deducted from the length of the vessel, the remainder to be multiplied by the breadth and the product to be multiplied by the depth, and this result was to be divided by ninety-five. This was an arbitrary rule adopted for the purpose of ascertaining *something* on which to gauge the collection of revenue, and was designed primarily for merchant craft. Applied to such vessels, it gave a tolerably accurate idea of the dimensions, as merchantmen were built on the same general lines. But when applied to English and American built frigates the formula is obviously unfair, as nearly all the British frigates involved in the War of 1812 were "full-built," the deck plans bearing a strong resemblance to a modern canal boat, while the American frigates were constructed on much finer lines, their deck plans showing a decided taper from the broadest part of the deck toward both the bow and the stern. The deck plan of the British frigate showed that the extreme breadth of the deck was maintained nearly the whole distance between the bow and the stern. Besides this, the rake of the stem and stern posts of the American frigate was greater than those of the British frigates. From measurements taken at the custom-house in Baltimore in 1812 it is shown that a merchant vessel built on the plan of the *Macedonian* registered three hundred tons, and was able to carry four hundred hogsheads of tobacco, while a ship of the same tonnage, but built more on the lines of the American frigate, could carry only one hundred hogsheads.

But even if the two vessels were built on the same general lines, this formula is eminently elastic in the hands of persons determined on arriving at agreeable figures rather than the truth. An increase of ten feet over all, six feet in beam and six feet in hold, would increase the apparent tonnage of a ship (one hundred and seventy-six feet long and carrying fifty-five guns)

fifty per cent, yet it would not admit of more than four extra guns. Adding ten feet to a frigate's beam and ten feet to her hold, although greatly increasing her tonnage, would not admit of a single additional gun in her armament. The American 44-gun frigate of the War of 1812 was from ten to fifteen feet longer than the British 38-gun frigate, but, owing to the rake of the stem and stern posts in the American frigates, not a single extra gun could be put into the broadside, there being just fifteen ports to the side in both the American and the British ship. When the *United States* returned to port with her prize, the *Macedonian*, both ships were measured, and the former was found to be ten feet longer but to have eight inches less beam than the English frigate. Here the American frigate apparently has ten more feet of deck, yet her constructors were unable to get a single gun more to the broadside on the gun deck than the *Macedonian* had, both ships having fifteen ports to the side.

Another point that English writers discuss is the heavy metal carried in the American frigates. They rightly declare that the American frigate was armed with 24-pounders on the main deck, while the English ship carried only 18-pounders. At the time of the War of 1812 24-pounders as the main armament of frigates was largely experimental, with the weight of experience and authority against their use. English commanders insisted that 24-pounders were too heavy, and could not be worked as effectually as 18-pounders. Experience had taught them that 18-pounders were the medium weights from which the highest possible efficiency could be derived; and when 24-pounders were introduced in the American frigates they pronounced them innovations, contrary to all established rules, and mirthfully pictured the disasters that would result from the experiment. In the years preceding the War of 1812 American and British officers frequently exchanged visits, so that the latter were thoroughly aware of the

kind of guns the American frigates carried, and they frequently criticised the 24-pounders. Captain Carden, of the *Macedonian*, on more than one occasion met Captain Decatur in the *United States*. While dining one day at the latter's table he "particularly pointed out the inefficiency of the 24-pounders on the main deck of the *United States*, and said that they could not be handled with ease and rapidity in battle, and that long 18-pounders would do as much execution and were as heavy as experience had proved that a frigate ought to carry." [1]

To a limited extent the criticism of the British commanders on the overweight of the 24-pounders on the main deck of the American 44-gun frigates was well founded. It is a fact that our three frigates of this class were overweighted, and the experiences of the first battles in which they were engaged discovered it to their commanders. In the first actions of the war the *Constitution* carried thirty 24-pounders on her main deck, or fifty-five guns in all, with a total weight in shot of fourteen hundred and one pounds, while her opponent, the *Guerrière*, carried thirty 18-pounders, or forty-nine guns in all, with eleven hundred and seventy-five pounds of metal. Before the close of the war the *Constitution's* armament was reduced to fifty-one guns, having a total shot weight of twelve hundred and eighty-seven pounds. These two figures—eleven hundred and seventy-five and twelve hundred and eighty-seven—probably represent the real difference in the weight of metal between these frigates. The *Constitution*, with her armament reduced to twelve hundred and eighty-seven pounds, captured an English force of fifty-five guns with a total shot weight of fifteen hundred and eight pounds, and with about one third of the loss and injury to herself. In her action with the *Macedonian* the *United States* carried fifty-four guns to the

[1] Mackenzie's Life of Decatur, p. 157.

Englishman's forty-nine, but on returning to port six of the *United States'* guns were landed, as it was found that their great weight caused the frigate to become hogged or broken-backed. The third of these frigates, the *President*, also reduced the number of her guns to fifty-two, but even this was not sufficient to prevent her from becoming hogged, and undoubtedly it was the cause of her being overtaken by a British squadron in 1815.[1]

[1] In comparing the weight of metal carried in American ships of war with that in English ships there are three important considerations to be kept in mind. First, the actual weight of American shot at this period was considerably below its nominal value. For instance, the American 32-pound shot weighed only thirty pounds, and sometimes less, and the 24-pound shot weighed but twenty-two and a half pounds, etc. In the action between the *Wasp* and the *Avon* it was officially reported that "the four shot which struck the *Wasp* are all thirty-two pounds in weight, being a pound and three quarters heavier than any belonging to this vessel." As the heaviest 32-pound shot in the *Wasp* was one and three quarters of a pound underweight, then, inasmuch as there was much irregularity in the weight of American shot, there must have been many 32-pound shot in the *Wasp* of even greater deficiency in weight. Cooper says: "In consequence of the infancy of the arts in America, both the soldiers and seamen have had to contend with their enemies . . . under the disadvantage of possessing inferior arms, powder and even shot. . . . Another consequence of this defective casting was a diminution in weight and consequently momentum. The latter fact having been alluded to in the course of the war, the writer personally weighed a quantity of shot, both English and American, and found that the old shot used in the beginning of the War of 1812 were comparatively lighter than those which had been cast at a later day; but in no instance was an American shot even then found to be of full weight. On the other hand, the English shot were uniformly of accurate weight. Some of the American 32-pound shot weighed but thirty pounds. . . . The average of the 18-pound shot was about seventeen pounds, but it is understood, as this examination occurred several years after the peace, that the shot as well as the guns were materially better than they had been previously to and during the war." James considers that "it is not worth inquiring whether or not this alleged trifling variation in weight between American and British shot does exist." To those familiar with James' method of delving into the minutest details and infinitesimal figures which would in any way diminish the American victory, this "not worth inquiring" will seem a practical concession of the point. These various authorities prove not only that American shot was deficient in weight but that British shot was uniformly accurate in weight. Theodore Roosevelt,

Another favorite method of excusing the British naval disasters of the War of 1812 was by representing the British ships as being old, worn out and rotten, and

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in his Naval War of 1812, has found that on an average the American shot was about seven per cent below its nominal weight, so that in the comparison of all metals in all the actions of this war this amount will be deducted from the American metal.

Second, American powder and cannon were of inferior quality. The *President*, while chasing the *Belvidera*, lost sixteen men by the bursting of a bow chaser and only six men from the enemy's fire. In many other actions in this war similar accidents happened to American cannon; and even in the action of the new *Guerrière* with the Moorish frigate off the coast of Africa, in 1815, several of the American crew were killed by the explosion of a gun. The shot themselves were of such poor quality that they frequently broke when they struck, thus losing their force. At times the shot flew to pieces before reaching its mark, thus falling against the sides of the ship with no more effect than so much grape or canister. An officer of the *Belvidera*, speaking of a shot fired from the *President*, says: "This shot, being of bad quality, it split into about fifty pieces."

Third, the *Guerrière* and the *Java* were French-built frigates. It will be remembered that a French 24-pound shot weighed twenty-six English pounds, and a French 18-pound shot was equal to nineteen and a half English pounds. To show that these ships, beyond a reasonable doubt, carried their French armaments and shot when engaged with the *Constitution*, we have the following evidence: From 1780 to 1812 the English had captured a great number of French vessels of war whose armaments aggregated several thousand cannon, together with several hundred thousand shot. It is not reasonable to suppose that when so many captured French vessels of war were taken into the English navy these valuable cannon and shot were thrown aside for old iron. On the contrary, it is more than probable that the French cannon were retained in the ships that had been built expressly to receive them. It is still more probable that these captured French ships were supplied solely with captured French shot, for a 13-pound shot (French 12) was not cast to fit a 12-pound muzzle, nor was a 26-pound shot cast to fit a 24-pound muzzle. Although it is possible to fire a 12-pound shot from a 13-pound bore and a 24-pound shot from a 26-pound bore, it is not to be presumed that the Lords of the Admiralty supplied their frigates mounting 26-pound cannon with 24-pound shot, or 13-pound cannon with 12-pound shot, when they had an enormous quantity of 26-pound shot and 13-pound shot cast expressly for these guns, especially when they could not use this shot for English cannon. We have proof that the *Guerrière* carried French shot, for an officer of the *Constitution* actually weighed the shot of both ships, and found that the *Constitution's* 24-pound shot were only three pounds heavier than the *Guerrière's*

their crews as deficient in discipline and gunnery, etc. As a matter of fact, in all these frigate actions the American ship was older than the English. In the *Constitution-Java* and the *United States-Macedonian* engagements the English ships were "new frigates," while the American frigates had been built in the preceding century. Of the *Guerrière* James said: "Her hull, from age and length of service, was scarcely seaworthy, and such was the general decay in which the *Guerrière* at that time was that had the frigate gone into Portsmouth or Plymouth, she would in all probability have been disarmed and broken up." Captain Dacres, who commanded the *Guerrière*, had a different opinion of his ship. A few months before his capture by the *Constitution*, he spoke of the ship in the highest terms, saying that "she'd take an antagonist in half the time the *Shannon* could" (see page 359), and the *Shannon* was one of the best frigates in the British service. A few weeks before meeting the *Constitution* Captain Dacres even more forcibly expressed his confidence in the ability of his ship to capture her, as will be seen in the following challenge, which he wrote on the register of the American brig *John Adams:* "Captain Dacres, commander of his Britannic Majesty's frigate *Guerrière*, presents his compliments to Captain Rodgers, of the United States frigate *President* [sister ship to the *Constitution*], and will be very happy to meet him, or any other American frigate of equal force to the *President*,

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18-pounders, and that there was nearly the same difference in favor of the latter's 32s. If the *Guerrière's* 18s were English 18-pounders, the deficiency of the *Constitution's* 24-pounders would have been three pounds, or nearly twice as much as it was ever claimed to be. How, then, can the discrepancy in these figures be accounted for unless the *Guerrière's* shot were French? If they were, everything is clear. Her 18-pounders in English measurement, which was the scale used by the officer in question, weighed nineteen and a half pounds. The *Constitution's* 24-pounders, allowing seven per cent for under weight, were about twenty-two and a half pounds, and thus we get an intelligible "only three pounds heavier than the *Guerrière's* 18s."

off Sandy Hook, for the purpose of having a social *tête-à-tête*." That Captain Dacres at the time of the action had not changed this opinion, is seen in the following: On the 10th of August, or nine days before this engagement, the *Guerrière* captured the American brig *Betsey*, commanded by Mr. Orne. Mr. Orne was aboard the *Guerrière* when that frigate met the *Constitution*, and says: "I soon saw from the peculiarity of her [the *Constitution's*] sails, and from her general appearance, that she was without doubt an American frigate, and communicated the same to Captain Dacres. He immediately replied that he thought she came down too boldly for an American, but soon after added, 'the better he behaves the more honor we shall gain by taking him.'"[1] Even after the action, when Captain Dacres and his officers had been several days in the *Constitution*, thus having an excellent opportunity of comparing the two ships, he still entertained the same views, and immediately on landing wrote that "the loss of the ship is to be ascribed to the early fall of her mizzenmast." This opinion was still more forcibly stated by Captain Dacres several months afterward. In his defense before his court-martial he says: "Notwithstanding the unlucky issue of this affair, such confidence have I in the exertions of the officers and men who belong to the *Guerrière*, and I am so well aware that the success of my opponent was owing to fortune, that it is my earnest wish, and would be the happiest moment of my life, to be once more opposed to the *Constitution* with them under my command in a frigate of similar force to the *Guerrière*."

But we have even a more explicit contradiction of James' statement in reference to the unprepared condition of the British frigates. Twelve years after the action between the *United States* and the *Macedonian*, Captain David Hope, who served in the *Macedonian*

[1] Coggeshall, History of American Privateers.

as first lieutenant, wrote to his former commander, Captain Carden:

"NEWTON, BY MUSSELBURGH, *June 22, 1824.*

"DEAR SIR: I have just received your letter of the 10th inst., in which you mention that Mr. James, in his naval history, has stated that you knew the ship's crew of the *Macedonian* was, for want of practice, deficient in gunnery. That statement is certainly totally unfounded, as in no ship in the British service could there have been more attention paid to the practical part of gunnery than was done by you to the crew of the *Macedonian.* The men were not only well trained, but the greatest attention was paid to every department relating to the guns. There was general exercise every evening before sunset, a division was exercised through the day, and frequently fired at a mark. In fact, everything was done to make the ship in all respects ready to meet the enemy. As to the state of discipline in the ship, that has been so strongly expressed by the sentence of the court-martial [three years before this letter was written], where the evidence was examined upon oath, that any comment of mine would be unnecessary. As an officer who has served his country twenty-eight years, and having been frequently in action with the enemy, in no instance did I ever see men more devoted to the honor and service of their country than the ship's company of the *Macedonian.* DAVID HOPE."

Captain George Richard Pechell, under date of May 14, 1824, wrote to Captain Carden to the same effect.

The real cause of the British naval disasters of the War of 1812 was an overweening confidence on the part of the British officers. English commanders for twenty years had been waging an easy naval warfare against France, whose discipline had been destroyed by the Revolution, in which all rank (which is especially necessary in ships of war) was obliterated. So far

had this been carried that the captain was styled "citizen captain," and the enervating influence of the Revolution was shown in the lack of discipline and order in French frigates of this period. The English had also been fighting against Spaniards, many of whom were so terrified at the sound of guns that they permitted themselves to be shot down like dogs by their own officers rather than ascend the rigging or perform their duty. The English sailor was spoiled by his too easy victories over the French and Spaniards, and when he came to match his strength with American tars he was handicapped by an exaggerated notion of his own prowess.

Intelligent and well-informed Englishmen saw this. The Edinburgh Review for April, 1840, said: "The American navy was then in its infancy, almost untried against civilized enemies, and obnoxious to the unmanly taunts of too many English party writers. The people of the United States felt a just and laudable pride when they saw their marine take its place among the best of Europe, and even assert its claim to the respect of the proudest maritime nation in the world." Hughes, in his History of England, says (vol. xiv, p. 18): "It is not to be denied that the American frigates were manœuvred with such skill as would have done honor to any officers of the British navy." Admiral Nelson, after critically watching the manœuvres of Captain Dale's squadron in the Mediterranean, said, "There is in the handling of those transatlantic ships a nucleus of trouble for the navy of Great Britain." When Napoleon, in 1803, parted with Louisiana, he prophetically said: "I have given to England a maritime rival that will sooner or later humble her pride."

In 1812 naval warfare had reached that stage of development when brute strength and animal courage had become secondary considerations. Success then depended more on the higher discipline of the men, better training at the guns, the intelligent use of im-

proved weapons, the skillful manipulation of the sails and the thousand and one little improvements in, about and all over a ship which only a cultivated intellect would suggest. These improvements, together with the indomitable pluck and quick perception that have ever characterized the American seaman, overwhelmed the British navy with disaster and consternation. This was the mainspring of our brilliant successes, and in this particular our naval officers achieved their highest triumph.

That a navy having such a brilliant career is without a full and continuous record of its achievements is the excuse for the present history. While we have excellent works on portions of our navy's career, no continuous narrative from 1775 to the present time is in existence. Cooper's history of the navy gives a continuous although meager narrative to the close of the Mexican War, but it has been out of print for nearly half a century.

Since beginning this work, in 1885, I have endeavored to get new light on the subject. By the courtesy of Admiral Aube, who in 1886 was the French Minister of the Marine and Colonies, I was permitted to search the archives of the French Navy Department in Paris, and there I discovered documents bearing on our troubles with the Directory in 1798–1801, which up to that time had not been published. This part of our national history has been a blank chapter, but the official reports of the French commanders concerned in that war throw a flood of light upon it, and show that it was one of the most interesting and glorious wars of our country.

To Edouard Chevalier, captain in the French navy, and to M. Leingy, chief of the Bureau of Archives of the Navy Department in Paris, I am greatly indebted for assistance in prosecuting my researches in Paris. I must also acknowledge my obligations to Mr. McLane, at that time the American minister to France, and to

Henry Vignaud, first secretary of the legation in Paris, for courtesy and assistance extended to me in my historical researches. I desire to express my great obligations to Edward Augustus Bond, in 1886 the librarian of the British Museum, who extended to me every courtesy during the eight months of my researches in that place. I desire also to extend my thanks to Rossiter Johnson, of New York, for valuable suggestions in the preparation of this work.

While I was in England—1885–'86—Sir Provo Wallis, at that time the senior admiral of the royal navy, who served in the *Shannon* as second lieutenant during her memorable action with the *Chesapeake*, June 1, 1813, favored me with documents of great value. Some of the reports of the British commanders concerned in the War of 1812 were garbled before the public were allowed to see them, in order to mitigate as much as possible the humiliation of British defeat. In the documents furnished by Sir Provo it appears that not only were these documents garbled, but the official report of Captain Broke, of the *Shannon*, was a forgery. That report, as published, is signed "P. B. V. Broke," but the following medical certificate proves that Captain Broke, on the 6th of June, 1813, and for six days before and for several weeks afterward, was absolutely unable "to dictate or write" any account of the action: "These are to certify that I, the undersigned, David Rowlands, M. D., F. R. S., late surgeon of his Majesty's naval hospital at Halifax, in Nova Scotia, was there when his Majesty's ship the *Shannon* arrived with her prize, the American frigate *Chesapeake*, on Sunday, the 6th of June, 1813. The former was commanded by the present Captain Wallis, owing to the dreadful wound which Captain Broke had received in the action with the enemy a few days previous. On the 7th of June I was requested by Alexander Jack, the surgeon of the *Shannon*, to visit Captain Broke, confined to bed at the commissioner's house in

the dockyard, and found him in a very weak state, with an extensive saber wound on the side of the head, the brain exposed to view for three inches or more. He was unable to converse, save in monosyllables, and, I am sure, totally unable to dictate or write an account of the action for some time afterward, owing to his severe wounds, loss of blood and the shock his whole frame must have experienced by the blow on the head. I grant this certificate to Captain Wallis, being called to do so by the death of Mr. Jack, the surgeon.—D. Rowlands, M. D." It appears, then, that this official report, signed "P. B. V. Broke," was neither written nor dictated, nor authorized by that commander, but was "a concoction of Commissioner Woodehouse and Captains Capel and Byron," men who saw nothing of the action, and knew nothing of it until the arrival of the *Shannon* and her prize in Halifax six days afterward. Even had these gentlemen shown their "concoction" to the then commanding officer of the *Shannon*, Lieutenant Wallis, before sending it to England, "I would have corrected the errors."[1]

The published official report of Captain Broke contains this episode: "Mr. Smyth, who commanded in our foretops, stormed the enemy's foretop from the fore yardarm, and destroyed all the Americans remaining in it." This "storming" is flatly contradicted by Admiral Wallis, who said: "It was mere invention, Smyth's having stormed her foretop, but he did board her from our foreyard and slid down on one of her backstays." The same published official report records: "The lieutenants, Johns and Law, of the marines, bravely boarded at the head of their respective divisions." To this Sir Provo replies: "Neither did the officers of the marines board, for when I took command of the quarter-deck I found them there." The published official report goes on to say: "Both ships came

[1] Admiral Sir Provo Wallis.

out of the action in the most beautiful order, their rigging appearing as perfect as if they had been only exchanging a salute." Admiral Wallis thinks otherwise. He says: "It was equally erroneous to say that the ships came out of action as perfect as if they had been only exchanging a salute, the fact being that our lower rigging was all cut through, and the masts, consequently, unsupported, so that had any sea been on they would have gone over the side."

I made every effort and brought all possible influence to bear on the Lords of the Admiralty in order to get permission to peruse the documents bearing on the War of 1812, but in reply to my application I was informed that "their Lordships express to you their regrets at not being able to comply with this request, as the regulations in force preclude all public inspection of admiralty records after the year 1800."

Lieutenant Roy C. Smith, U. S. N., has edited my work from a professional standpoint, but I have not followed all his suggestions in the matter of technical phrases. As this history is for the people, I have in many cases changed the professional terms to a more "landlubberly" phraseology, in order that the descriptions of the battles may be as clear as possible to the average landsman. The diagrams and maps, also prepared for this work, are not intended for a technical work, but simply to convey to the mind of the reader in the plainest possible manner the movements of the ships and their geographical bearings.

The study of the United States navy is far from being completed, and, impressed with this fact, I would gladly receive information from any reliable source bearing on our navy, in order that it may be incorporated in future editions.

E. S. M.

New York, *July, 1893.*

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PART FIRST.

THE WAR OF THE REVOLUTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNITED STATES A MARITIME NATION.

THE people of the United States have inherited an aptitude for the sea from five of the greatest maritime nations of the world. The Spanish and Portuguese at the time of the discovery of the New World were the boldest and most skillful mariners in Europe, and the State of Maine to-day is populated to an appreciable extent by descendants of these first explorers who have contributed not a little to the shipbuilding industry that for two centuries has made the State famous. After the Spaniards and Portuguese came the French, Dutch and English, all of whom at some period have maintained a high place among the maritime powers of Europe. The French and Dutch, like the Spaniards and Portuguese, became assimilated with the English population but, in common with the Anglo-Saxons, retained their skill as sailors.

Not only did the people of the United States inherit nautical skill from the boldest navigators of the Old World, but the surroundings and every-day life of the early colonist were such as to develop this skill to an extraordinary degree. The first settlements were made along the coast line, and even those who came at a late day followed the course of rivers and lakes as being the easiest means of receiving their supplies and of forwarding their products to the outside world, so that the maintenance of sailing craft became an almost necessary condition of existence. Even between houses in the same settlement, especially those that clustered around irregularly formed bays, visits

were more conveniently made in boats, and it was not uncommon to see a household embark in a barge on a peaceful Sabbath morning and row across the quiet waters of some bay or river to "attend meeting." The waters along which these settlements were founded supplied the colonists with an important means of subsistence, so that fishing in boats became a regular occupation.

The trade between the colonies developed this nautical bent on a larger scale. Owing to the difficulty of cutting roads through boundless forests and the great expense of bridging rivers, intercolonial trade was carried on by water, so that from the beginning the colonies were compelled to maintain a commercial marine. As the settlements grew in number and wealth this commerce increased proportionately until at the outbreak of the Revolution it had aroused the jealousy of England. The colonial legislatures from the first were fully alive to the importance of this trade and in 1639 New England legislated directly in favor of her fishermen and shipwrights, the former being excused from military duty during the fishing season while the latter were exempt the year around. When we remember the dangers surrounding these feeble colonies, both from a savage foe and from hostile Europeans, we can more readily understand how great a privilege was exemption from military service in those days.

As a result of this fostering care shipbuilding soon became an important industry. The first decked vessel built in North America was constructed by Schipper Adrian Block and was launched in the Hudson River in the summer of 1614, its length being thirty-eight feet on the keel, forty-four and one half feet over all, and eleven feet beam. Other small vessels for the Indian trade were built about this time in New Amsterdam (New York). In 1615 the French, Portuguese and Spaniards had about three hundred vessels in the Newfoundland fisheries while the English had about

one hundred and seventy, most of these vessels making some port in North America their base of supplies. In 1632, twelve years after the landing of the Pilgrims, "a vessel of one hundred tons, and in the next year another of double that measurement, were launched in Mystic River, Massachusetts."

We may form some idea of the great interest taken by the early settlers in shipbuilding from the following extract from a letter written in 1641 by a New England colonist to friends in England: "Besides many boats, shallocks, hoys, lighters, pinnaces, we are in a way of building ships of a hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred tons. Five of them are already at sea, many more in hand at this present, we being much encouraged herein by reason of the plenty and excellence of our timber for that purpose, and seeing all the materials will be had there in a short time." Many of these vessels were built by Hugh Peters, who some years later was executed in England for high treason. By 1676 Massachusetts alone had built seven hundred and thirty vessels, varying from six tons to two hundred and fifty tons, and in 1690 the *Falkland*, the first ship of the line built in America, was launched in the Piscataqua. In 1713 Massachusetts employed three thousand four hundred and ninety-three seamen, and four hundred and ninety-two vessels with a total of twenty-five thousand four hundred and six tons. And in the following year the first schooner built in America was launched, its builder being Henry Robinson of Cape Ann.

Many circumstances contributed to make the intercolonial commerce assume the character of an armed trade. On looking over the map of North America of the period from 1630 to 1660, it will be seen that the region about the St. Lawrence was occupied by the French, who had settled there as early as 1527, the present New England States were held by the English, New Netherlands (New York) by the Dutch,

New Sweden (Delaware) by the Swedes, Virginia and Maryland by the English, while South Carolina and Georgia were claimed by the French, and Florida by the Spaniards. Thus an English vessel bound from Massachusetts to Virginia, skirting along the coasts of New Netherlands and New Sweden, frequently fell in with outward and inward bound ships of those colonies as well as with those of France and Spain. The parent states, while at war and sometimes when at peace, encouraged their colonies in the New World to attack, harass, and in every way check the growth of their neighbors, and this rendered it necessary for vessels engaged in the coasting trade to be well armed, while their crews were as carefully instructed in the use of firearms as in the handling of the sails.

This armed trade was further necessitated by the boldness and number of the buccaneers who infested the coast of North America and the West India Islands in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and even at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As early as 1631 the Colony of Plymouth built a bark of thirty tons, which was named the *Blessing of the Bay*, for the special object of defending its coasts against pirates. By the close of the seventeenth century piracy had assumed alarming proportions, and the exploits of Captain William Kidd finally compelled England to take vigorous measures against it, and for a time the freebooters were suppressed. But after the peace of 1713 they began their depredations again, and in 1717 a piratical craft called the *Whidah*, of twenty-three guns, manned by one hundred and thirty men under the command of Samuel Bellamy, cruised off the coast of New England with impunity until she was wrecked with her prizes on Cape Cod, where all on board perished except six, who were seized and executed in Boston. About 1718 William Rhett routed a gang of pirates who had been established near the mouth of Cape Fear River, North Carolina. Two sloops were seized and

their crews were exterminated. In 1723 an English sloop of war brought into Rhode Island twenty-five pirates.

Whale-fishing also tended to develop the seamanship of the colonists. This industry was established early in the seventeenth century and increased rapidly; before the Revolution Massachusetts alone had three hundred vessels engaged in it. Owing to the great distance these vessels sailed from home and their frequent meetings with hostile ships, they were heavily armed and their crews were carefully instructed in the use of firearms. The fate of Oldham in the sloop *Gallop*, which was captured by the Narragansett Indians, taught the early mariner that even the savages must be guarded against.

Such were the peculiar conditions of early life in the North American colonies that tended to develop the maritime spirit of the American people. It is not strange, therefore, that the colonial seaman was a skillful mariner and a dangerous foe, and it was largely owing to this that after the independence of the United States was established the Lords of the Admiralty, in their eagerness to secure American seamen, violated the laws of nations in order to impress our sailors into their service. Many of the best colonial families entered their sons in the royal navy where they attained high rank, some of them being numbered among England's greatest naval heroes. Washington, at the age of fifteen, "urged so pressingly to be permitted to enter the British navy, that the place of a midshipman was obtained for him."[1]

It was not long before the American colonist began to assert himself on the high seas. The first attempt was made in 1613 when Samuel Argal commanded an expedition of eleven vessels, mounting in all fourteen light guns, from Virginia against a French settlement

[1] Marshall's Life of Washington, vol. ii., p. 2.

in Nova Scotia. As the French were without artillery the place was reduced with little difficulty. On returning to Virginia, Argal was sent against Acadia a second time with only three vessels, but better equipped than his first command, and he laid waste all the French settlements.

Entering New Amsterdam (New York) on his return, he obtained the surrender of that place, claiming that it rightfully belonged to England by virtue of its having been first discovered by an Englishman, but as he had no means of making good his conquest the Dutch returned to their old allegiance immediately after his departure. Returning to Virginia, Argal lost one of his ships in a storm, another was driven to the Azores and made its way to England, and the third regained the Chesapeake. These expeditions were undertaken while the two countries concerned were at peace, and the prisoners taken narrowly escaped being executed as pirates. This fact, together with the statement that pirates of that day often began their enterprises with prayer, reveals a singularly unsettled condition of affairs, and shows how necessary it was that the early mariner should be self-reliant and capable of fighting his own battles. In 1645 a vessel built in Massachusetts gained wide celebrity by beating off a rover of Barbary near the Canary Islands after an all-day fight. In 1648 the settlements of Hartford and New Haven employed a vessel of ten guns to cruise in Long Island Sound so as to guard against the encroachments of the Dutch, and from 1665 Connecticut kept a small cruiser off Watch Hill to intercept the Narragansett Indians in their threatened attempts against the Montauks, who were allies of the settlers.

The ease and impunity with which the French and Indians made their incursions on the English settlements aroused the latter to a realization of the danger threatening them from the north. The New England colonists, being nearest to the Canadas, were the heav-

iest sufferers from these inroads, and were the first to take effective measures against the French. On the 28th of April, 1690, "seven or eight hundred men in eight small vessels" were sent by Massachusetts against Port Royal, Nova Scotia, the command of the expedition being given to Sir William Phipps, a New Englander. Port Royal was taken before a blow could be struck in its defense. The squadron then destroyed a French fort at the mouth of the St. John River, and on the 30th of May it returned to Boston in triumph.

Elated with this success, the colonists determined to send an expedition against Quebec, and on the 9th of August, 1690, a fleet of "thirty-two vessels, the largest numbering forty-four guns,"[1] carrying two thousand men and provisions for four months, sailed from Nantucket. A land force under the command of Captain Church was to reach the point of attack by Lake Champlain. Sir William Phipps and John Walley were made general and lieutenant-general of the naval forces. It was not until the 6th of October that the fleet approached Quebec, the expedition under Captain Church in the meantime having found the route impracticable, returned. On the 8th of October Sir William Phipps landed fourteen hundred men about two miles below the town, and on the following day the ships opened a heavy cannonade, but they did little injury owing to the great height of the land batteries. After several days of ineffective cannonading the fleet put back to Boston, but on the return passage it met with heavy weather, in which two of the vessels foundered while several were carried to the West Indies. One ship was wrecked in the St. Lawrence, and, says Palfrey, "the number of men lost in the expedition by disease and casualties was estimated at two hundred, though only thirty fell by the hands of the enemy

[1] Palfrey's History of New England, vol. iv., p. 51.

before Quebec. The money sacrificed by Massachusetts was reckoned at fifty thousand pounds."

In 1706 four Spanish ships of war appeared before Charleston, South Carolina, and demanded the surrender of that place. Lieutenant-Colonel Rhett was commissioned vice-admiral for the emergency, and hoisting his flag on a galley called the *Crown* got under way with several armed vessels to engage the enemy, but the Spaniards, not waiting for a battle, beat a hasty retreat. In May, 1707, twenty-three transports and whaleboats, convoyed by the *Deptford*, Captain Stuckley, and the galley *Province*, Captain Southack, made an unsuccessful attempt against Port Royal, and two years later another expedition against that place proved disastrous. On the 18th of September, 1710, however, a fleet of thirty-six vessels of war and transports, under the command of Captain Nicholson, sailed from Boston for a third attack on Port Royal, which place had been returned to France by treaty. The expedition arrived before the town on the 26th of September, and on the 1st of October the forts were carried by storm. In honor of the reigning Queen of England the name of the town was changed to Annapolis.

Flushed with victory, Nicholson went to England where he urged more extensive operations for the following year, and as a result of his efforts a fleet of fifteen vessels of war and forty transports, under the command of Vice-Admiral Sir Hovenden Walker, appeared in Boston Harbor on the 24th of June, 1711, where it took aboard seven thousand well-appointed troops, regulars and provincials, and on the 30th of July made sail for Quebec. On the night of the 22d of August, while ascending St. Lawrence River in a fog, eight ships with eight hundred and eighty-four men were lost. A council of war then decided unanimously to give up the expedition, upon which the royal ships sailed for England while the colonial vessels made their way to Bos-

ton. This disaster plunged the New England provinces heavily in debt, and so checked their maritime enterprise that not for thirty years did they again venture on any considerable undertaking.

In 1745 they determined to make another attack on the French, and a fleet of fourteen war vessels with eighty or ninety transports was collected in Nantasket Roads, Boston Harbor. The troops were commanded by Colonel William Pepperel while the fleet was placed under the orders of Captain Edward Tyng. The ships sailed in several divisions which were to rendezvous at Cape Canso, Nova Scotia, and then invest Louisburg. This fortress was the strongest in the New World. For twenty-five years the French had been strengthening its defenses, until at this time it was called the second Dunkirk. Bancroft says: "Its walls raised on a neck of land on the south side of the harbor, forty feet thick at the base, and from twenty to thirty feet high, all swept from the bastions, surrounded by a ditch eighty feet wide, were furnished with one hundred and one cannon, seventy-six swivels and six mortars; its garrison was composed of more than sixteen hundred men; the harbor was defended by an island battery of thirty 22-pounders and a royal battery on the shore, having thirty large cannon, a moat and bastion; all so perfect that it was thought two hundred men could have defended it against five thousand."

In less than two months from the time the Governor of Massachusetts broached the enterprise to the General Court a squadron had sailed to blockade Louisburg. On the 24th of March the three thousand men from Massachusetts embarked, and after a week's voyage arrived at Cape Canso, where they found the three hundred and four men from New Hampshire, while ten days later five hundred and sixteen men from Connecticut arrived; but the expedition was detained by ice until the last of April. In the meantime Admiral Warren, having received orders to give all possible as-

sistance to the colonies, joined the force at Cape Canso with five ships of sixty guns each and six frigates.



On the 30th of April the expedition sailed from Cape Canso and on the following day appeared before Louisburg. The colonists were destitute of siege guns, and with a view of supplying this deficiency four hundred men were landed to capture some heavy cannon in an outwork called the Grand Battery. In the night the French retired from this battery to their main fortifications, thus enabling the colonists to secure the guns without bloodshed.

The investment was soon completed and maintained with no interruption until the 15th of June, when the French, learning of the capture of the long-expected 64-gun relief ship *Vigilant* with her stores and troops, sent out a flag of truce. On the 17th the fortress with six hundred regular troops and thirteen hundred militia was surrendered. The French flag was kept flying at the fort some days after the surrender, by means of which two richly laden Indiamen and one South Sea whaler, valued at three million dollars, were decoyed under the guns and captured. On the return of the expedition to Massachusetts the 20-gun galley *Shirley*, Captain Rouse, secured eight prizes, two of which were taken only after an obstinate resistance. For this service Captain Rouse received a commission in the royal navy. The French attempted to retaliate on the English colonists by sending a powerful fleet to devastate

their coasts, but the first division of this fleet was scattered by a storm and the second was defeated by a British squadron under Admiral Anson and Admiral Warren.

During this war the English colonies sent out between three and four hundred privateers. In 1749 five hundred and four vessels cleared from the port of Boston and four hundred and eighty-nine entered, not counting coasters and fishing craft. At Philadelphia in the same year there were two hundred and ninety-one clearances and three hundred and three entries. The shipping of New York was about the same as Philadelphia, while that of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had one hundred and twenty-one clearances and seventy-three entries besides two hundred coasting vessels. In the following year, 1750, a vessel built of live oak arrived in Charleston, South Carolina. The qualities of this wood were found to be so much superior to those of the white oak, which was in general use up to that time, that vessels were afterward constructed of live oak in preference to the wood formerly used.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NAVAL WARFARE.

At the outbreak of the American Revolution, in 1775, the science of naval warfare had reached a well-defined period of development and was in condition to enter upon another. In the first period, or from the earliest records down to the successful introduction of cannon in ships in the sixteenth century, weapons throwing a projectile with sufficient force to penetrate the side of a ship had not been invented, so that the only way of injuring the enemy was by ramming, boarding, or by throwing missiles from a height sufficient to overtop the bulwarks and reach the men exposed on the deck. Therefore shipwrights of this first period raised the decks of war vessels to as great height as safety would permit. As the weight of these decks made the ship topheavy, not a few were capsized in moderately smooth water, and to overcome this difficulty the constructors invented towers or castles, which were erected in the bow and stern, and not only enabled the men to fight from a greater height but diminished the danger of capsizing; for with castles it was not necessary to build the decks so high. Although not a vestige of the tower or castle remains in the modern ship the name "castle" or "forecastle" is still retained. The masts also were topped with a parapet from which archers and spearmen could hurl their missiles over the enemy's bulwarks.

The implements of offense and defense of the first period were: espringalds, haubergeons, bacinets, bows, jacks, doublets, targets, pavises, lances and firing bar-

rels. These weapons were improved, until in 1337 we find the cannon-pavoir or stone shot thrower, basilisks, port-pieces, stock-fowlers, sakers and the bombard. The last was a large instrument of hammered iron made of bars welded together, throwing a stone shot weighing from one hundred and forty to one hundred and ninety-five pounds. But none of these weapons were capable of penetrating the side of a ship.

These circumstances caused a race among the naval constructors for ships with high sides, each endeavoring to outstrip the other in the height of the castles and parapet masts. The different classes of ships in this first period of naval history were: cogs, which were swift-sailing vessels of two hundred and fifty tons, carrying one hundred and thirty seamen besides sol-



The Great Harry.

diers; barges, which carried from sixty to eighty men; balingers, which bore some resemblance to the modern

barge; caraks, which were used chiefly in the navies of Portugal, Spain, Holland and France; crayers or transports of sixty tons or less; doggers and lodeships of thirty men each, used chiefly as fishing and pilot boats; and fluves or two-masted transports. Of the lesser craft there were galleys, galiots, hoc-boats or store-boats, lynes, persours, pikards and espinaces. The best specimen of this school of naval architecture of which we have a record is the *Great Harry*, built in 1488.

The gradual improvement in cannon with sufficient power to penetrate the side of a ship rendered these



The Sovereign of the Seas.

high decks, castles and towers not only useless but objectionable, and this brought about a new style in naval construction which began the second era in ship-building. In the same ratio that cannon were improved the towers and castles were lowered, until at the outbreak of the American Revolution the frigate had those graceful lines which were not improved, except in minor details, down to the introduction of ironclad ships,

1855–1865; and that again marks a third era in naval construction. But the introduction of cannon in ships was slow, owing to imperfect castings and the unwillingness of the Admiralty to depart from the traditions of the service. The cannon first used were unwieldy, and dangerous alike to friend and foe, one discharge being considered sufficient, the rest of the battle being fought on the old tactics. The invention of brass cannon in 1535 did much to hasten this evolution in shipbuilding.

The *Henry Grace de Dieu*, a ship of one thousand tons built in 1512, marks the dividing line between the first and second eras in naval architecture. In this curious craft were combined the towers, castles, lofty decks and parapet masts of the old school with the numerous ordnance of the new, her armament consisting of fourteen guns on the lower deck, twelve on the main deck, eighteen on the quarter-deck and poop, eighteen on the lofty forecastle and ten in the stern ports. This distribution of her cannon shows that her builders adhered to the idea of placing the heaviest batteries on the highest decks, where they could be fired over the bulwarks and upon the decks of the enemy, and in spite of frequent disasters from thus making the ship topheavy, English shipwrights clung to their traditions with characteristic tenacity. Raleigh notes that a vessel of six hundred tons, the *Mary Rose*, sank at Spithead because of "a little sway in casting the ship about."



The frigate in 1800.

When the *Sovereign of the Seas* was built, 1637, the second period of naval construction was well under way. In this craft, which for many years was regarded as the "goodliest shippe in all the worlde," the forecastle was

entirely done away with and the after tower was much reduced, while the arrangement of her armament was the reverse of that of the *Henry Grace de Dieu*, the heaviest and greatest number of guns being on the lower decks while the lighter calibers were placed on the upper decks. Her armament consisted of thirty cannon (60-pounders) and demi-cannon (32-pounders) in the lower tier, thirty culverins (18-pounders) and demi-culverins (10-pounders) in the middle tier, twenty-six sakers (5-pounders) in the third tier, twelve light guns in her forecastle, fourteen murthering pieces on the two half decks, ten chase guns forward, ten chase guns aft, besides "many loopholes in the cabin for musquet shots."

From this time there was a diminution in the number of calibers. The *Sovereign of the Seas* carried nine or ten different calibers varying from 60-pounders to 1-pound swivels, which in the excitement of battle occasioned great delay and confusion in loading. At the close of the eighteenth century frigates of her tonnage carried only two principal calibers and the number and weight of the guns also were reduced to one third, so that while the *Sovereign of the Seas* carried one hundred and thirty-two cannon, ranging from 60-pounders down, a ship of the same size in 1775 carried only forty-eight guns, 18-pounders and 12-pounders at the most. Masts also, which hitherto had been made of a single stick, were divided into two and finally three separate spars.

Such, in brief, was the progress of naval construction down to the close of the eighteenth century. The war ship at that period was the result of centuries of experiments, and a well-ordered frigate had come to be a little community in itself, isolated for the time being from the rest of mankind and governed by its own code of laws. The ship's company was a human machine in which each man was a part, all moving with exact precision at the will of the commander. The crew was

divided into little companies, each having a well-defined work to do. One set of men was appointed to reef, furl and take in the topgallant sails, topsails, topgallant, royal and topmast studding sails; and this in turn was divided into three sections, one for each mast, and were known as foretopmen, maintopmen and mizzentopmen; each having two captains, one for the port watch and one for the starboard watch.

Another set of men had charge of the fore and main courses and lower studding sails whose duty it was to set and furl the jib, flying jib and spanker. Other men had charge of all ropes in the after part of the ship, while the "scavengers" swept the decks. Then came that institution peculiar to sea life known as the "boy." He was employed chiefly as a servant to officers and messes, but in time of battle he was called a "powder-monkey," for then he was required to bring ammunition from the passing scuttles to the guns. The captain of a frigate usually had both a steward and a boy who acted as his servants, while the lieutenants, purser, surgeon and sailing master were entitled to one boy each. The lieutenants of the marines were waited on by marines. One boy was allotted to the gunner, boatswain and a few others as a special favor, while a man and a boy were appointed to a certain number of midshipmen.

The entire crew was divided into two watches called the port and starboard watches, each watch being commanded by one of the boatswain's mates whose silver whistle, by which orders were given, could be heard amid the roar of a hundred cannon or the thunder of the heaviest storm; but the captain, first lieutenant, surgeon, purser, gunner, carpenter, armorer, the stewards and boys were excused from the watches except in cases of danger. These watches took turns in being on duty, alternating every four hours except between four and eight o'clock in the afternoon, when the watches were only two hours long, so as to reverse the order every twenty-four hours.

The same system was observed at the meals. The ship's company was divided into messes: the captain had his table in his cabin; the lieutenants, purser, surgeon, sailing masters and the two lieutenants of the marines, composing the ward room officers, had their table in the ward room, and the midshipmen in the steerage. The seamen were divided into messes of eight men, each mess being waited on by a boy. Every mess was served by itself, and it was a privilege that tended much toward good fellowship to oust any member of a mess who was not agreeable to the others, and if such men did not find congenial messmates elsewhere they were put into a mess reserved especially for such disagreeable fellows. The meals were served either on the berth deck or the gun deck where large platforms were provided which, when placed on casks or suspended from the deck above, made comfortable tables, about thirty inches high, the men sitting on benches.

The fare consisted of hard tack and fresh beef while in port (but salt pork and beef when at sea), pea-soup and burgoo or, as the seamen sportively called it, "skillagallee," which was oatmeal boiled to the consistency of hasty pudding. Cocoa sometimes was given in place of burgoo, and once a week flour and raisins were served with which the men made "plum duff." The cook of each mess drew these provisions, prepared them for the mess and washed the kids; he also drew a gill of rum mixed with two gills of water for each man, which was known as grog and was served out at noon. At four o'clock in the afternoon a half-pint of wine was served, the boys receiving only half rations of grog but were allowed pay for the rest.

Just before the British frigate *Java* sailed from England on the cruise in which she was captured by the *Constitution*, 1812, a landsman was brought aboard by the press-gang, and toward evening he asked where his bed was—a very natural and proper inquiry for a

landlubber to make. But the unfeeling boatswain told him to stick a knife in the softest plank in the ship and use that for a bed. When, however, the watch to which he was assigned came to "turn in" the "greenhorn" found that the crew slept in hammocks strung on the berth deck, and that during the day the "beds" were rolled up, carried to the main deck and stowed away in nettings over the bulwarks, where they afforded additional protection to the men from the enemy's sharpshooters in the tops. Each hammock had its number, and on the bulwarks a corresponding number was marked so the men knew exactly where to place them. Every evening when the ship was at sea the drummer beat to quarters, all hands hurried to their stations and eight men and a boy were placed at each gun, one of the men being known as the captain of the gun, while another loaded and sponged and others seized the side and train tackle-falls which ran the gun in and out of the port. The boys of the ship took stations near the magazine, each boy knowing which gun he was to supply.

There were thirty or forty marines in every frigate. These soldiers, who were called marines simply because they were serving in a ship instead of on land, performed the police duty in the ship, standing guard at the gangway when in port and acting as sentinels at the cabin and ward room doors and at the ship's galley during cooking hours. It was the policy of commanders to engender as much "coolness" as possible between the sailors and the marines so as to diminish the chance of collusion between them. They slept, messed and worked separately, the marines considering themselves two or three degrees better than the seamen, while the latter regarded the marines with supreme contempt as being no better than landlubbers, and anybody making a particularly stupid remark was told to "Go tell it to the marines."

At night the marines were stationed at the great

guns as sentinels, and in time of battle they were placed in the tops where it was their duty to pick off the enemy with their muskets. In case of close quarters they were expected to board the enemy, assisted by two or three seamen from each gun, the latter being armed with pistols, cutlasses and boarding pikes. These were known as the "boarders," and when they were called for, just so many men and no more ran from each gun to the critical point. Beating to quarters was practiced every day in well-ordered frigates, so that the men became wonderfully proficient in executing orders, and in the presence of the enemy these exercises were supplemented by bringing up ammunition and piling it along the deck for immediate use, while small arms, boarding pikes and cutlasses were stacked around the masts and other convenient places. The cockpit and the steerage were cleared for the reception of the wounded and the surgeon and his assistants spread out their instruments, while the decks above were sanded to make them less slippery when blood should begin to flow.

Such was the complicated machinery of the frigate at the close of the eighteenth century, and it seemed at that time as if there was little left for American ingenuity to improve upon. The general lines of the ship remained the same down to the introduction of iron in shipbuilding, and the armaments underwent no radical change until the American civil war, while the system of managing the ship's company is practically the same to-day as it was a hundred years ago. But the American commander and shipwright made improvements here and there in the details of the frigate which, when taken as a whole, accomplished amazing results in the French War and in the War of 1812.

The first thing to which they turned their attention was the condition of the crew. Impressment was seldom resorted to. The Massachusetts State government attempted to coerce sailors to serve in the *Alliance* in

1779, when that ship was commissioned to convey Lafayette to France, but in deference to the wishes of the French patriot the authorities filled out the crew by other means. By this system of impressment, as practiced in England, men were seized in the streets or wherever found by the press-gangs and hurried off to a cruel service without having time even to make necessary arrangements for leaving their families. The Americans endeavored to secure a sufficient number of seamen by making their service attractive, and well-known results have shown the wisdom of what in those days seemed a rash innovation.

After the men were enlisted the American commander did much toward improving their condition. In the days of the *Henry Grace de Dieu* naval warfare was waged on the principle that the more men crowded into a ship the better. The regular complement of the *Henry Grace de Dieu*, which ship was about the size of an American 36-gun frigate, was seven hundred, but when an enemy was expected this number was still further increased. The *Mary Rose*, a vessel of only six hundred tons, carried a crew of five or six hundred men. At the close of the eighteenth century this overcrowding had been reduced so that ships of the tonnage of the *Henry Grace de Dieu* were manned by only three hundred men and those of the *Mary Rose* by only one hundred and eighty men.

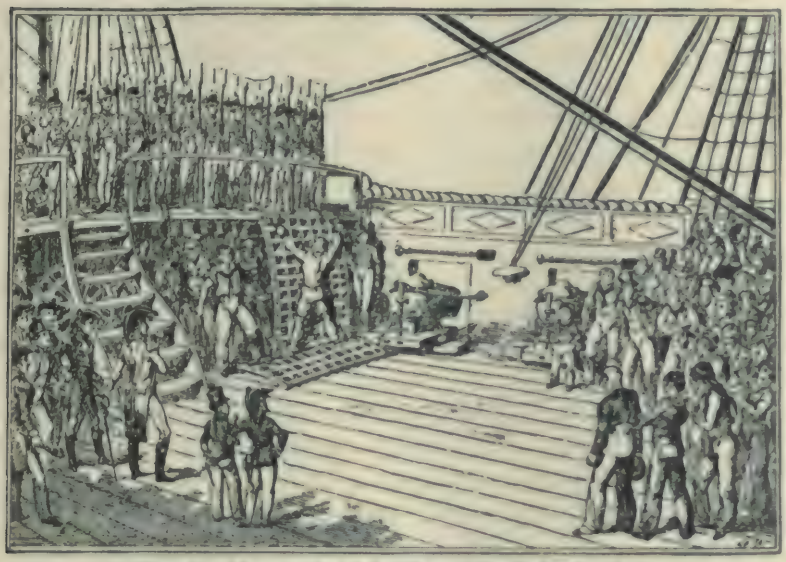
At the time of the American Revolution, however, the sanitary condition of war ships, in spite of the reduction made in the number of the crew, was very imperfect. In fact the greatest danger on an extended voyage was not so much the perils of the sea or attacks from the enemy as scurvy, smallpox and other diseases. It sometimes happened that nearly an entire ship's company was carried off while in mid-ocean by these dreadful scourges, and one of the great achievements of Captain David Porter in his cruise of seventeen months in the Pacific was the perfect health in which he

kept the three hundred and more men who were for so long a time confined on the decks of the little *Essex*. We can better understand this when it is borne in mind that this occurred in days when the only means of preserving meat was by salting, and when the many modern improvements in the art of keeping food wholesome were unknown. That the expedients resorted to by Captain Porter to keep his crew in good health were unusual in his day is seen by the minute description of them in his Journal.

That the Americans were entitled to the credit of having begun a reform in the matter of impressment of seamen is shown in Captain Edward P. Brenton's History of the British Navy, when he says: "On the subject of impressment I will, however, venture to say as one well entitled to speak from experience, that Great Britain must, as she values her welfare, be the first to abandon this unjust practice. Let us not be compelled to abandon it by America. Let us relinquish it as a willing and cheerful sacrifice to the just and indisputable rights of man." The brutality of the British service at this period, although not equaling that of some Continental navies, was, to the American mind, almost beyond belief. Flogging for petty offenses in many ships was of almost daily occurrence, and severer punishments, such as flogging through the fleet, were inflicted with frequency according to the disposition of the commander. While a detailed description of the last-named punishment may be revolting, it is necessary in order to convey some idea of the condition of the seamen of that day and the great improvements that have been made.

We have a well-authenticated instance of flogging through the fleet as late as 1811, which occurred in the British 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*, Captain John S. Carden, afterward captured by the *United States*. A midshipman named Gale, who was reputed to be a "rascally, unprincipled fellow," found his handker-

chief in the possession of one of the crew. Gale charged the man with stealing it although the latter insisted



Flogging (from a sketch by George Cruikshank, 1818).

that he had found it under his hammock, which was quite possible since the midshipmen frequently passed through the berth deck on inspection and on other duties. The case was reported, a court-martial was convened and the seaman was sentenced to receive three hundred lashes through the fleet and imprisonment for one year. On the day appointed the prisoner was taken into the ship's launch. This boat had been rigged for the occasion with poles and grating to which the prisoner, stripped to the waist, was "sized up" or bound at his wrists and ankles to the grating with spun yarn. The ship's surgeon took his place in the launch to determine when nature had reached the extreme limit of endurance, and a boat from every ship in the fleet, each containing one or two officers and two marines fully armed, attended and was connected by a towline to the prisoner's boat.

Having completed these preliminaries the crew of the victim's ship manned the yards and rigging to get a better view of the proceedings, for the punishment was intended to be a warning to them. At the word from the officer in charge the boatswain, with coat off and sleeves rolled up, carefully spread the nine cords of the cat with the fingers of his left hand, then threw the instrument over his right shoulder and brought it down with all his strength on the bare back of the prisoner. The flesh crept and reddened. Lash followed lash with nothing to break the dreadful silence save the swish of the nine cords cutting through the air and striking on human flesh, and the cries of the agonized prisoner. In order that the blows might be delivered with undiminished vigor to the end the boatswain, on the completion of one dozen lashes, handed the cat to one of his mates who stood beside him, and they in turn delivered one dozen lashes each.

The first sixty lashes were inflicted alongside the *Macedonian*, in conformity with the custom of giving the greatest number by the prisoner's ship so that his gory back might strike terror in the crews of the other ships. By this time his back had been lacerated beyond description, the flesh resembling "roasted meat, burned nearly black before a scorching fire." His shirt now was thrown over his wounds, the boatswain and his mates returned to their ship, all hands were piped down, the drummer beat the Rogue's March and the procession of boats moved on to the next ship. Here the yards and rigging were manned by the crew and the boatswain with his mates descended into the prisoner's launch, cat in hand. Removing the shirt he exposed the ghastly spectacle to his shipmates aloft, and he and his mates then delivered one, two, or three dozen lashes, according to the number of ships in the fleet. This scene was to be repeated at the side of every ship in the fleet until the three hundred lashes were delivered, but the attending surgeon at the end of two hundred and twenty blows

pronounced the prisoner unfit to receive any more. Galled, bruised and agonized as he was, the prisoner begged them to deliver the remaining eighty blows so that he would not again be compelled to pass through the degrading ordeal. His request was denied, he was taken aboard his ship, his wounds were dressed, and when partially healed—for human flesh could never fully recover from such horrible laceration—Captain Carden, Shylock-like, determined to have the whole pound of flesh, and the remaining eighty were delivered before the year of imprisonment was begun. Thus the mangled wretch was ruined for life, broken in spirit, all sense of self-respect gone, ever to be a crawling, servile, cringing slave to the beck of his fellow-seamen, ready with sullen alacrity to obey their slightest wish.

This case was neither one of exceptional severity nor one of rare occurrence. When the United States 32-gun frigate *Essex*, Captain Smith, was in England, shortly before the War of 1812, a deserter from an English vessel of war sought refuge in her. A British lieutenant came aboard and made a formal demand for the man. On being sent below to get his clothes the deserter deliberately walked to the carpenter's bench on the gun deck and seizing an axe, with one blow cut off his left hand. Picking up the severed member with his right hand he returned to the quarter-deck and flung it at the feet of his captors, saying that he would cut off his left foot before he would again serve in a British man-of-war. Horrified at the spectacle the English officer left the *Essex* without his prisoner.

It was a peculiar feature of the brutal punishment of flogging that officers and men who at first sickened and fainted at the sight of it gradually grew indifferent, and in some instances acquired a craving for the bloody ordeal and took a fiendish delight in superintending it. The first lieutenant of the *Macedonian*, David Hope, was one of these. He took the exquisite delight of a connoisseur in the art of flogging, being especially fond

of seeing the tender flesh of boys lacerated and torn, and with the nice sense of propriety that comes to experts he ordered that boys should handle the cat when boys were to be flogged. Captain Lord William Fitzroy was of the same school, but he urged as his excuse that discipline required it. He insisted that the men must be cowed, and when punishments grew slack he hunted up old charges in order that discipline might not be impaired through want of the application of the lash.

Flogging was practiced in the American service at this time but not to the extent to which it was carried in the British and in Continental navies. The articles of war of the American navy in 1812 and prior to that declare that "not more than twelve lashes shall be given for a crime," and although there were cases where American commanders exceeded this limit, the instances were rare and the punishment inflicted was insignificant when compared with the cruelty of the British service.

In manœuvring their ships and in gunnery also the Americans made great improvements. Even as late as 1812 the English commander had much to learn from the American. Sir Howard Douglas in his work on Naval Gunnery says: "The United States commanders so circumspectly and cautiously adapted their tactics to the superior powers of their armaments that, even when opposed to very inferior numbers and quality of ordnance, they would neither approach nor permit us to join in close battle until they had gained some decisive advantage from the superior faculties of their long guns in distant cannonade and from the intrepid, uncircumspect and often very exposed approach of an assailant, who had been long accustomed to contemn all manœuvring, and who only considered how to rush soonest into a yardarm action. Such unquestionably was the character of these proceedings [the naval actions of the War of 1812]. The uncircumspect gallantry of our commanders led our ships unguardedly

into snares which wary caution had spread." The imputation in this extract that American commanders objected to fighting at close quarters is not borne out by facts. The Americans undoubtedly availed themselves to the utmost of their superior seamanship and gunnery, and allowed no advantage to escape their quick perception, but when anything was to be gained by coming to close quarters they were the first to seize the opportunity.

The skill with which American commanders manœuvred their vessels was one of the most notable features of the War of 1812. The manner in which they tacked, luffed, gave their ships stern board and raked during the excitement and confusion of battle was astonishing. In raking especially they were remarkably proficient. By this manœuvre the ship was laid at right angles across the bow or stern of an opponent so that the entire broadside swept or raked the enemy's deck from end to end without his being able to bring a gun to bear in return, except a few bow or stern chasers.

American seamen, besides performing the ordinary duties of a war ship, were constantly exercised at the great guns. James says: "Highly to the credit of the naval administration of the United States, the crews of their ships were taught the practical rules of gunnery, and ten shot, with the necessary powder, were allowed to be expended in play to make one hit in earnest; while the British seamen, except in particular cases, scarcely did so once in a year, and some ships could be named on board of which not a shot had been fired in this manner upward of three years." The superiority of American gunnery at this period is well known. In speaking of the action between the *Enterprise* and the *Boxer* the London Times of October 22, 1813, said: "What we regret to perceive stated, and trust will be found much exaggerated, is that the *Boxer* was literally cut to pieces in sails, rigging, spars

and hull; whilst the *Enterprise*, her antagonist, was in a situation to commence a similar action immediately afterward. The fact seems to be but too clearly established, that the Americans have some superior mode of firing; and we can not be too anxiously employed in discovering to what circumstance that superiority is owing." Again, Sir Edward Codrington, writing to Lady Codrington in 1814 of the *Peacock-Épervier* fight, said: "It seems that the *Peacock*, American sloop of war, has taken our *Épervier*. But the worst part of our story is that our sloop was cut to pieces and the other scarcely scratched." In many cases the American sailors formed a strong attachment for their guns, speaking to them and treating them almost as if they were endowed with life, and the frigate was never in perfect order until the "pets" had received their usual cleaning and polishing. The men gave each gun a name, which was engraved on a copper plate and attached to its carriage or fastened over its port. Some of the most popular of these names were: "Brother Jonathan," "Raging Eagle," "Polly," "Spitfire," "Nancy," "Jumping Billy," "Yankee Protection," "Mad Anthony," "Liberty Forever," "Sweetheart," "America," "Defiance," "United Tars," "Liberty or Death," "Bunker Hill," "Willful Murder," etc.

In other ways the Americans trained their crews to be prepared for any emergency. Captain Porter when at sea frequently sounded the alarm of "Fire!"—an enemy more dreaded by sailors than all the other perils of the sea—at all hours of the night to accustom the men to face danger, and as a further test he caused smoke and flame to ascend from the main hold. At first there was some confusion among the crew, but the delinquents were promptly punished and soon the alarm "Fire!" had no terror for the men, and they went with their cutlasses and blankets to their quarters in perfect self-possession.

While the early American commanders made many

improvements in the science of naval warfare, as they found it toward the close of the eighteenth century, it is a curious fact that every departure from established theories was hooted at by the English press as unfair, illegitimate or ridiculous. It is interesting to note, however, that the Admiralty almost invariably followed the lead of the Americans in this respect, and toward the close of the War of 1812 paid us the compliment of building a frigate exactly on the plan of the American 44-gun ships—which in the early part of the war they had ridiculed as being "bundles of pine boards with a gridiron flag floating over them"—as will be seen from the following notice in the London Times of March 17, 1814: "Sir G. Collier was to sail yesterday from Portsmouth for the American station in the *Leander*, 54. This ship has been built and fitted out exactly upon the plan of the large American frigates." Shortly after the War of 1812, when the *Constitution* was being fitted at Boston for a cruise in the Mediterranean, she was visited by a distinguished officer of the royal navy. On returning to her quarter-deck, after having made a thorough inspection of the frigate, he remarked: "This is one of the finest frigates, if not the very finest, I ever put my foot aboard of; but, as I *must* find fault, I'll just say that your wheel is one of the clumsiest things I ever saw, and it is unworthy of the vessel." The American commander replied: "That wheel, sir, is the only thing English in the ship. When this ship captured the *Java*, in 1812, our wheel was knocked into splinters by a shot from the Englishman. After the engagement the *Java's* wheel was fitted, and, although we think it as ugly as you do, yet we keep it as a trophy."

Among other things of which English writers "accused" the Americans was the wearing of strips of steel in the sailors' caps, to prevent saber cuts from penetrating. It is true that some of the American crews in this war were supplied with stout leather caps crossed with

two strips of iron, covered with bearskin, designed to protect the head. The crew of the *Siren* in 1814 was provided with such caps, and strips of bearskin with the fur still attached were used to fasten them on, and coming down each side of the face they bore some resemblance to false whiskers and gave the men a ferocious appearance. But it seems a little out of place to put this in the form of an "accusation," when we remember that Vice-Admiral John Benbow, master of the British fleet under Admiral Russell in the battles of Barfleur and la Hogue, had his entire body incased in metal, from which we may infer that the British officer of that period generally protected himself in the same manner. Or coming down to the present time, we find England's choicest cavalry not only wearing a helmet made of steel but having the body incased in the same metal. How much more excuse there was for seamen to wear armor than soldiers is clearly shown by Sir Richard Hawkins, who said: "On shore it is only the bullet that hurteth, but in a ship I have seen the splinters kill and hurt many at once," and he cites an instance where a dozen were hurt by splinters, "the most part whereof," he added, "would have been excused if they had been armored."

Another improvement in naval warfare of which English writers seriously "accused" the early American commander was the invention of fine sheet-lead cartridges which could be handled with more safety and with greater rapidity in action than the old paper or flannel cartridge of the British service. This gave the Americans an advantage equal almost to one gun to three, for as a sheet-lead cartridge seldom left a particle of itself in the gun there was no time lost in sponging and worming the gun after firing, which was always necessary when paper or flannel cartridges were used. Again, the Americans were "accused" of inventing chain and bar shot and a new kind of grapeshot and canister, which played such havoc with British rigging

in the War of 1812. The grapeshot in 1812 was formed by seven or eight balls attached to an iron and tied in a cloth, which were scattered by the explosion of the powder, while the canister shot was made by filling a powder canister with balls each as large as two or three musket balls. But the fact that these improvements were afterward introduced into the British navy only too well attests the wisdom of the American commanders in first using them.

CHAPTER III.

THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTION.

ALTHOUGH open hostilities between the American colonies and Great Britain began with the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1775, it was not until late in that year that the Continental Congress became sufficiently organized to take serious measures in defense of its claims, and it was not until October that attention was given to the formation of a naval force. On the 5th of October, 1775, news was received that two British transports, laden with arms and ammunition, had sailed from England for Quebec, and as the Continental army stood in great need of such supplies, Congress determined to make an effort to capture them. On the 13th of October, Silas Deane, John Adams and John Langdon (Christopher Gadsden afterward taking the place of John Adams) were appointed a committee with authority to fit out two swift-sailing vessels, one to carry ten carriage guns and a proportionate number of swivels, with eighty-five men, and the other to carry fourteen guns, to cruise "eastward" for the purpose of intercepting these or any other storeships. This was the first official step toward the formation of a national American navy. During the Revolution the affairs of the navy were managed by various committees which were known as the "Marine Committee," "Marine Board," etc. Subordinate to these were the "Continental Naval Board," "Board of Admiralty," etc. The powers and functions of these committees were changed many times during the war.

so that it would be tedious as well as unprofitable to follow them.

On the 30th of October, 1775, it was decided to fit out two more vessels, one of twenty and the other of thirty-six guns, and Stephen Hopkins, Joseph Hewis and Richard Henry Lee were added to the first Naval Committee, and all matters pertaining to the marine were referred to them, Congress reserving the final decision. Congress also held the power of appointing the commissioned officers as low as third lieutenant, while the Naval Committee selected all subordinate officers.

Down to November, 1775, Congress had not gone so far as to consider a permanent separation from England, and orders had been issued to all armed forces both on land and on sea carefully to refrain from acts of violence which could be construed as open rebellion. But British cruisers were not so hesitant in beginning hostilities, and several merchantmen which had cleared from port according to all the requirements of the acts of Parliament were captured as lawful prizes. The flourishing town of Falmouth (now Portland) was ruthlessly laid in ashes, while several other settlements were attacked and the people compelled to abandon their homes late in the winter.

But these barbarities produced a far different effect from that which their perpetrators anticipated. The colonial device of a rattlesnake and the motto "Don't tread on me" could not have been in better keeping with the spirit of the people, for these depredations, instead of overawing the colonists, only served to arouse that indomitable resistance which endured the sufferings of a seven years' struggle against a powerful adversary. Seeing that the royalists did not hesitate to resort to extreme measures, the Continental Congress, on the 25th of November, 1775, authorized the capture of any armed vessel employed against the colonies, or any tender or transport engaged in carrying munitions of war to the British army or navy.

Congress soon realized the great advantage to be derived from a naval establishment, and on the 13th of December, at the suggestion of the Naval Committee, ordered the construction of five ships of thirty-two guns each, five of twenty-eight guns, and three of twenty-four guns, to be completed by the following April. The expense of building these vessels was estimated at $866,666.66, and they were to be built in the following States: One in New Hampshire, two in Massachusetts, one in Connecticut, two in Rhode Island, two in New York, one in Maryland, and the others at such places as the committee should designate. The names of these ships were: *Hancock*, *Randolph*, *Raleigh*, *Warren*, *Washington*, *Congress*, *Effingham*, *Providence*, *Trumbull*, *Virginia*, *Boston*, *Delaware* and *Montgomery*. Other laws were soon passed for the purchase and equipment of vessels suitable for cruisers. On the 22d of the same month the Naval Committee laid before Congress the following list of officers, which was approved: Esek Hopkins, commander in chief; Dudley Saltonstall, Abraham Whipple, Nicholas Biddle, John Burroughs Hopkins, captains; John Paul Jones, Rhodes Arnold, —— Stansbury, Hoysted Hacker, Jonathan Pitcher, first lieutenants; Benjamin Seabury, Joseph Olney, Elisha Warner, Thomas Weaver, —— M'Dougall, second lieutenants; John Fanning, Ezekiel Burroughs, Daniel Vaughan, third lieutenants.[1] The pay of the officers and petty officers was fixed as follows: Commander in chief, $125 a month. Officers

[1] The following vessels, purchased in 1775, formed the nucleus for the navy of the Revolution, but none of them were built for war purposes; they were such merchantmen as could be secured in the emergency, and were pierced for guns and altered as much as circumstances would allow: the 24-gun ship *Alfred*, the 20-gun ship *Columbus*, the 16-gun brig *Lexington*, the 16-gun brig *Reprisal*, the 14-gun brig *Cabot*, the 14-gun brig *Andrea Doria*, the 14-gun brig *Hamden*, the 12-gun brig *Providence*, the 10-gun sloop *Independence*, the 10-gun sloop *Sachem*, the 10-gun sloop *Hornet*, the 8-gun schooner *Fly*, the 8-gun schooner *Wasp* and the 4-gun sloop *Mosquito*.

of a ship of twenty guns and upward: captain, $60; lieutenant, $30; master, $30; surgeon, $25; chaplain, $20; midshipman, $12; gunner, $15; seaman, $8. Officers of a ship of ten to twenty guns: captain, $48; lieutenant, $24; master, $24; surgeon, $21.66; midshipman, $12; gunner, $13; seaman, $8. The pay of the following was the same in any class of cruisers: armorer, $15; sailmaker, $12; yeoman, $9; quartermaster, $9; quarter gunner, $8; coxswain, $9; cook, $12. Commanders were allowed $4 and $5 a week for rations; and lieutenants, captains of marines, surgeons and chaplains, $4 when on shore. Prize money coming to the officers and seamen of the Continental navy was divided in shares: captains, 6; first lieutenant, 5; second lieutenant, 4; surgeon, 4; master, 3; steward, 2; mate, 1½; gunner, 1½; boatswain, 1½; gunner's mate, 1½; sergeant, 1½; privates, 1.

On the 9th of November, 1775, Congress resolved: "That two battalions of marines be raised, to be enlisted and commissioned to serve for and during the present war between Great Britain and the colonies, and to be considered as a part of the Continental army before Boston; particular care to be taken that no persons be appointed or enlisted into said battalions but such as are good seamen or so acquainted with maritime affairs as to be able to serve with advantage at sea when required." On the 30th of November these battalions were ordered to be recruited independently of the army before Boston.

On the 5th of September, 1776, the Marine Committee decided that the uniform for the officers of the navy should be as follows: Captains, a coat of blue cloth with red lapels, slashed cuffs, a stand-up collar, flat yellow buttons, blue breeches and a red waistcoat with yellow lace. The uniform for lieutenants consisted of a blue coat with red lapels, a round cuff faced, a stand-up collar, yellow buttons, blue breeches and a plain red waistcoat. Masters were to have a blue coat

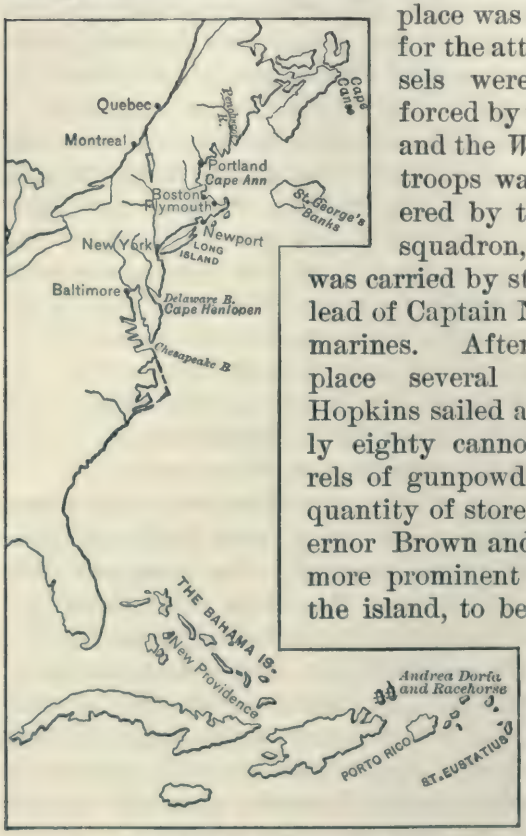
with lapels, round cuffs, blue breeches and a red waistcoat; while the midshipmen had a blue coat with lapels, a round cuff faced with red, a stand-up collar, with red at the buttons and button holes, blue breeches and a red waistcoat. The marines were to have a green coat faced with white, round cuffs, slashed sleeves and pockets, with buttons around the cuff, a silver epaulet on the right shoulder, skirts turned back, buttons to suit the facings, white waistcoat and breeches edged with green, black gaiters and garters. The men were to have green shirts "if they can be procured." In April the Massachusetts Council decided that the officers of the State cruisers should have a uniform of "green and white and that they furnish themselves accordingly, and that the colors be a white flag with a pine tree and the inscription 'An Appeal to Heaven.'" It is doubtful, however, if many of these prescribed uniforms were worn by the officers, as their pay was meager and Congress found great difficulty in supplying even the most necessary armaments and ammunition.

The first naval effort of the Revolution was commanded by Captain Esek Hopkins, who is described as "a most experienced and venerable sea captain." At nine o'clock on a clear, frosty morning early in January, 1776, this officer stepped into his barge at the foot of Walnut Street, Philadelphia, where a squadron of eight cruisers had been collected, and amid the discharge of artillery and the cheers of the multitude he made his way through the floating ice to his flagship, the *Alfred*. When he gained the deck Captain Dudley Saltonstall gave the signal, and First Lieutenant John Paul Jones hoisted a yellow silk flag bearing the device of a pine tree and a rattlesnake, with the motto "Don't tread on me." This was the first flag hoisted on an American man-of-war. The "grand Union flag," or flag having the thirteen American stripes with the English union jack in the field, was also displayed. The destination of this squadron was kept secret, but

it was not until the 17th of February that the ships got to sea, as they were detained six weeks by the ice off Reedy Island. This squadron comprised the following vessels: The 24-gun ship *Alfred* (flagship), Captain Dudley Saltonstall; the 20-gun ship *Columbus*, Captain Abraham Whipple; the 14-gun brig *Andrea Doria*, Captain Nicholas Biddle; the 14-gun brig *Cabot*, Captain John Burroughs Hopkins; the 12-gun brig *Providence*, the 10-gun sloop *Hornet*, the 8-gun schooner *Wasp*, and the 8-gun schooner *Fly*. The first of these vessels, the *Alfred*, had been a merchant ship called the *Black Prince*, and arrived from London only a few weeks before under the command of John Barry, afterward a captain in the navy. She was a small vessel, but was considered a stout ship of her class, and was named the *Alfred* after Alfred the Great, who was commonly regarded as the founder of the British navy. She was armed with twenty 9-pounders, and carried a few guns on her quarter-deck and forecastle. The *Columbus*, originally the merchant ship *Sally*, was named after the discoverer of America, and the *Cabot* after Sebastian Cabot, who discovered the northern part of the continent. The *Andrea Doria* was named after the great Genoese admiral of that name, while "the *Providence*," wrote John Adams, "was named for the town where she was purchased, the residence of Governor Hopkins and his brother Esek, whom we appointed the first captain."

These vessels were to rendezvous at Cape Henlopen, but on the night of the 19th the *Hornet* and the *Fly* were separated from the squadron and they did not again join it. Seeing nothing of Lord Dunmore's ships, which had been devastating the coast, and learning that a quantity of military supplies were stored in the town of New Providence, which was feebly garrisoned, Captain Hopkins determined to make an attack on the place and if possible seize the stores. Arriving at Abaco he sent three hundred men in two of the ves-

sels to New Providence with the view of surprising the garrison, but off that port it was found that the place was fully prepared for the attack. The vessels were then re-enforced by the *Providence* and the *Wasp*, a body of troops was landed, covered by the guns of the squadron, and the fort was carried by storm under the lead of Captain Nicholas of the marines. After holding the place several days Captain Hopkins sailed away with nearly eighty cannon, fifteen barrels of gunpowder and a large quantity of stores, besides Governor Brown and several of the more prominent inhabitants of the island, to be held as hostages for the welfare of certain Americans who were in the hands of the enemy. Governor Brown afterward was exchanged for Lord Stirling. On arriving off the eastern end of Long Island, April 4th, the squadron captured the 6-gun tender *Hawke*, commanded by a son of Captain Wallace, and on the following day it took the 12-gun bomb-brig *Bolton*, Lieutenant Edward Sneyd.



Scene of the naval operations of 1776.

A little after midnight, April 6th, a stranger came into the squadron and the *Cabot* immediately ranged alongside and hailed. This was answered with a broad-

side, upon which the *Cabot* opened fire and for several minutes kept up a close cannonading. "The *Cabot* was disabled at the second broadside, the captain being dangerously wounded, while the master and several men were killed. The enemy's whole fire was then directed at us [in the *Alfred*]. An unlucky shot having carried away our wheel block and ropes, the ship broached to and gave the enemy an opportunity of raking us with several broadsides before we were again in a condition to steer the ship and return their fire. The second lieutenant of the marines was killed."[1] The stranger proved too heavy for the *Cabot*, and the latter withdrew from the unequal contest. By this time the *Alfred* had closed, and the *Providence*, having secured a position off the enemy's lee quarter, opened an effective fire. After an hour's cannonading, during which the American vessels suffered considerably, the *Alfred* lost her wheel and became unmanageable, and the stranger, finding her antagonists too numerous, seized the opportunity to withdraw. She afterward was known to be the 20-gun ship *Glasgow*, Captain Tyringham Howe, manned by a crew of one hundred and fifty men and boys, of whom she lost one killed and three wounded.[2] The Continental Gazette, in its issue of May 29, 1776, said: "Just before the *Glasgow* came into the harbor it was plainly perceived by the holes in her sails that she had standing, and by the hanging of her yards, that she had been treated in a very rough manner." The *Cabot* had four killed and seven wounded, Elisha Hinman, afterward captain, being among the latter. The *Alfred* had six killed and six wounded, and the *Columbus* one wounded, making a total loss to the Americans of ten killed and fourteen wounded.

The escape of the *Glasgow* was not due to any lack

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[1] Log book of the *Alfred*.

[2] Schomberg's History of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 427.

of spirit on the part of the Americans but to the want of experienced officers, organization and discipline. Captain Howe of the *Glasgow*, however, made a gallant defense and won the well-deserved commendation of his senior officer. In June, Captain Hopkins' conduct was inquired into by Congress, and it was decided that his instructions, which "directed him to annoy the enemy's ships upon the coasts of the Southern States," had been exceeded. On the 16th of October, 1776, a vote of censure was passed upon him, and three days later he was ordered to take "command of the fleet formerly put under his care," but afterward his name was dropped from the list of officers, and on the 2d of January, 1777, he was formally dismissed from the service. The affair with the *Glasgow* for a time had an unfortunate effect on the seamen. Many of the sailors became discouraged with the prospects which the navy offered them and enlisted in the army, so that it was difficult to fill out the crews. The rank of commander in chief of the navy was intended to correspond with the rank that Washington held in the army, but from the time of the dismissal of Captain Hopkins no commander in chief of the navy was appointed, that rank afterward being merged in the office of the President.

On the 23d of March, 1776, Congress took more decisive measures against England. Letters of marque were issued, and thenceforth all public and private cruisers of the colonies were authorized to capture any vessel, armed or unarmed, sailing under the British flag.

After the squadron under Captain Hopkins had left the Delaware the *Lexington*, Captain John Barry, while cruising off the Capes of Virginia, April 17th, fell in with the *Edward*, Lieutenant Boucher, an armed tender of the *Liverpool*, mounting from six to eight guns and carrying thirty-five men. After a spirited action of an hour's duration the *Edward* surrendered,

having sustained serious injuries and a severe loss in killed or wounded. The *Lexington* mounted sixteen long 4-pounders, and out of a crew of seventy lost two killed and two wounded. In the following October the *Lexington*, under the command of Captain William Hallock, while returning from the West Indies laden with powder and military stores, was captured by the British 32-gun frigate *Pearl*. Owing to a high sea it was impossible to transfer the prisoners to the frigate, and the *Pearl*, after taking out four or five men, placed a prize crew aboard the *Lexington* with orders to follow. As night came on, dark and boisterous, the American prisoners, seventy-five in all, seized the opportunity, when the British prize officers went below for a moment, to rise on their captors, recovered possession of the vessel, changed her course and ran into Baltimore with the British prize crew as prisoners. Richard Dale, afterward celebrated in the *Bonhomme Richard-Serapis* fight, was a master's mate in the *Lexington* during this cruise. The British prize officer, an acting lieutenant, was dismissed from the royal navy.

On the 9th of May the 8-gun schooner *Wasp*, while cruising under the command of Captain Charles Alexander, captured the enemy's bark *Betsey*. A week afterward the *Andrea Doria*, Captain Nicholas Biddle, put to sea, and, cruising between the Delaware and the Penobscot, in the course of four months captured ten vessels, which with one exception were sent into port. Two of the prizes were transports conveying four hundred Highlanders. One was recaptured by the frigate *Cerberus*, while the other was seized by the soldiers aboard, but the latter was again captured. When Captain Biddle returned to port he had only five of his own crew aboard, the others having been put in charge of prizes. The *Cabot*, Captain Elisha Hinman, got to sea toward the latter part of May and cruised off the northeast coast until the 5th of October, during which time she captured seven vessels and sent them

into port. Soon after the return of Captain Esek Hopkins' expedition from New Providence, the *Columbus*, Captain Abraham Whipple, got to sea and cruised northward until August, securing in that time four prizes.

At the time the Continental Congress formally declared the United States independent of Great Britain, July 4, 1776, England had in commission one hundred and twelve vessels of war, carrying three thousand seven hundred and fourteen guns; and of this force, seventy-eight men of war, mounting two thousand and seventy-eight guns, were stationed on the coast of North America.[1] The American navy at the same time consisted of twenty-five cruisers, mounting four hundred and twenty-two guns; but only six of these vessels were built for war purposes, the others being merchantmen purchased and fitted out for the occasion.[2]

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[1] Schomberg's History of the British Navy, vol. iv, pp. 319–321.

[2] On the 3d of October Congress ordered another cruiser and two cutters, and in November it authorized the construction of three 74-gun ships of the line, a sloop of war and a packet. None of the ships of the line were ever in the American service. In January, 1777, another frigate and a sloop of war were ordered, besides which eight prizes were fitted for the service. Including the vessels purchased in 1775 and the cruisers ordered by the law of December 13, 1775, the navy at the Declaration of Independence consisted of the following vessels: the 24-gun ship *Alfred*, the 20-gun ship *Columbus*, the 16-gun brig *Lexington*, the 16-gun brig *Reprisal*, the 14-gun brig *Cabot*, the 14-gun brig *Andrea Doria*, the 14-gun brig *Hamden*, the 12-gun brig *Providence*, the 10-gun sloop *Independence*, the 10-gun sloop *Sachem*, the 10-gun sloop *Hornet*, the 8-gun schooner *Fly*, the 8-gun schooner *Wasp*, the 4-gun sloop *Mosquito*, the 32-gun ship *Hancock*, the 32-gun ship *Randolph*, the 32-gun ship *Raleigh*, the 32-gun ship *Warren*, the 32-gun ship *Washington*, the 28-gun ship *Congress*, the 28-gun ship *Effingham*, the 28-gun ship *Providence*, the 28-gun ship *Trumbull*, the 28-gun ship *Virginia*, the 24-gun ship *Boston*, the 24-gun ship *Delaware*, the 24-gun ship *Montgomery*, the 10-gun cutter *Revenge*, the 10-gun cutter *Surprise* and the 10-gun cutter *Dolphin*.

Of these vessels the *Washington*, *Effingham*, *Virginia*, *Congress*, *Delaware* and *Montgomery* never got to sea, being destroyed when the British seized Philadelphia and New York. The *Virginia*, while attempting to get an offing, ran aground in Chesapeake Bay and was there captured by a

Comparative forces in 1776.

American navy: 25 vessels, mounting 422 guns.
British navy: 78 " " 2,078 "

Two days after the Declaration of Independence the 10-gun sloop *Sachem*, Captain Isaiah Robinson, engaged a British letter of marque of six guns, and after some loss to both vessels the enemy struck. On returning to port the *Sachem* was sent to the West Indies with dispatches, while Captain Robinson was transferred to the command of the *Andrea Doria*, and in December he sailed in this brig for St. Eustatius, to transport arms and ammunition for the American army. At this port he received a salute from the Dutch governor, which was the first ever given to the new flag by a foreign power. The governor soon afterward was removed for his indiscretion. When off the western end of Porto Rico on his return passage Captain Robinson discovered an English brig bearing down on him. The vessels soon closed, and after a desperate fight of two hours the enemy surrendered, the prize proving to be the British brig *Racehorse*, Lieutenant Jones. The *Andrea Doria's* loss was four killed and eight wounded, while that of the *Racehorse* was considerably greater, Lieutenant Jones being mortally wounded. The *Racehorse* had been sent out for the express purpose of taking her captor. Captain Robinson resumed his course for the Delaware, where he

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British squadron. This left the Americans with a seagoing force of twenty-five vessels, aggregating four hundred and twenty-two guns.

By a resolution of October 10, 1776, Congress declared that the number of captains in the navy should be twenty-four, and that they should rank in the following order: James Nicholson, John Manly, Hector McNiel, Dudley Saltonstall, Nicholas Biddle, Thomas Tompson, John Barry, Thomas Read, Thomas Grennall, Charles Alexander, Lambert Wickes, Abraham Whipple, John Burroughs Hopkins, John Hodge, William Hallock, Hoysted Hacker, Isaiah Robinson, John Paul Jones, James Josiah, Elisha Hinman, Joseph Olney, James Robinson, John Young and Elisha Warner. On the 17th of September, 1779, Samuel Nicholson and John Nicholson, brothers of James Nicholson, were appointed captains in the navy.

arrived with his prize in safety. The *Andrea Doria* was burned shortly afterward to prevent her falling into the hands of the British. In October the *Wasp*, under command of Lieutenant J. Baldwin, made a short cruise during which she took three prizes.

The name of John Paul Jones has been already noticed in the list of officers as a first lieutenant in the American navy, in which capacity he sailed in the squadron under Captain Esek Hopkins to New Providence. Returning from that service he was made commander of the 12-gun brig *Providence*, and was employed in conveying troops from Rhode Island to New York. He was frequently chased and several times under fire, but always escaped by skillful seamanship. At one time he covered the retreat of a brig that was coming from the West Indies laden with military supplies for Washington's army, which was hotly pursued by the British frigate *Cerberus*, but Lieutenant Jones drew the enemy off in chase of himself, so that the brig escaped. On the 10th of October, 1776, he was promoted to the rank of captain and was ordered to cruise between Boston and the Delaware.

On the 1st of September, 1776, while he was engaged in this service off Bermuda, five sails were made out to the windward, and he immediately beat up to reconnoiter. Selecting what he took to be a large merchant ship, Captain Jones was fast closing when he suddenly discovered that she was the British 28-gun frigate *Solebay*. The *Providence* immediately bore up to escape while the Englishman made all sail in pursuit, and at the end of four hours succeeded in getting within musket shot of the brig's lee quarter. Seeing that capture was inevitable unless some extraordinary expedient was resorted to, Captain Jones edged away until he had almost brought the frigate astern, when suddenly he put about dead before the wind, with every stitch of canvas set alow and aloft and studding sails on both sides. So unexpected was this manœuvre that, although

the brig was obliged to pass within pistol shot of the Englishman, the latter did not sufficiently recover from the confusion of the moment to fire a gun until the *Providence* was out of reach of his grape. Then began another long chase, but the brig proved her superiority on this point of sailing by gradually drawing out of reach of the enemy's bow chasers. By this clever artifice Captain Jones saved a ship to the navy and drew much attention to himself by his bold and skillful seamanship. Shortly afterward Captain Jones, still commanding the *Providence*, was chased by the 32-gun frigate *Milford*, but he escaped. Continuing his cruise he secured many valuable prizes, and running up to Cape Canso he created great havoc in the enemy's shipping besides destroying several fishing stations. The *Providence* returned to Newport October 7th, having secured or destroyed fifteen prizes.

For these services Captain Jones was placed in command of the 24-gun ship *Alfred*, while the *Providence* was given to Captain Hoysted Hacker. On the 2d of November, 1776, these vessels got under way for a general cruise against the enemy, and on the following night, by skillful manœuvring, they passed through the British squadron off Block Island. On the 13th, while off Cape Canso, the *Alfred* fell in with and after a sharp action captured three vessels, one of them being the British 10-gun transport *Mellish* carrying one hundred and fifty men. She was found to be laden with supplies for General Burgoyne's army, then assembling at Montreal, and among other articles in her were ten thousand suits of uniform. Of such value to the Americans was this capture that Captain Jones determined to see his prize safely in port, and in case of pursuit to sink the *Mellish* rather than let the enemy recapture her.

On the following night, during a snowstorm, the *Providence* parted company, and the *Alfred*, having captured a letter of marque of sixteen guns, made for

Boston with her prizes. When off St. George's Banks, December 7th, she was discovered by the British 32-gun frigate *Milford*, which two months before had chased Captain Jones when in command of the *Providence*. At the time the stranger was made out she was to the windward, the dusk of evening making her outlines somewhat indistinct. Captain Jones now ordered the *Mellish* and the other prizes to steer southward all night, regardless of any signals that might be given from the *Alfred*. About midnight he hoisted a top-light and with the letter of marque in company tacked to the west, well knowing that the prizes would not alter their courses. The stratagem succeeded, and when day broke the prizes were well below the horizon, while the *Milford* was crowding all sail in a vain endeavor to come up with the *Alfred*. Having led the frigate far enough from the prizes the *Alfred* spread more canvas, and by evening had run the *Milford* out of sight, but the letter of marque was recaptured. Captain Jones then made for port, where he found his seven prizes safely anchored.

During the war of the Revolution some of the seaboard colonies fitted out cruisers at their own expense, and although such craft can not be accounted as belonging to the United States navy, yet in some instances they performed valuable services, so that a notice of the better authenticated actions will not be out of place.

The first capture made by these vessels was by the Massachusetts State cruiser *Lee*, commanded by John Manly, who received a commission from General Washington to cruise in the vicinity of Boston for the purpose of intercepting supplies for the British army. On the 29th of November, 1775, the *Lee* entered Cape Ann Roads with the prize *Nancy* laden with two thousand muskets and bayonets, besides eight thousand fuses, thirty-one tons of musket shot, three thousand round shot for 12-pounders, a 13-inch mortar, two 6-pounders, several barrels of powder and fifty carcasses or great

frames for combustibles to set buildings on fire. On the 8th of December this vessel captured three more transports, and soon afterward she was chased into Gloucester by the cruiser *Falcon*, but by running close inshore she inflicted considerable injury on her pursuer and escaped. For these valuable captures Mr. Manly received a captain's commission, April 17, 1776, and was assigned to the command of the 32-gun frigate *Hancock*. In the following spring, 1776, the *Franklin*, commanded by James Mugford, captured the *Hope* and brought her safely into port with fifteen hundred barrels of powder, a large quantity of intrenching tools, gun carriages and other stores which were destined for the British army; all of which were forwarded to the troops under Washington.

Early on the morning of June 17, 1776, the Connecticut State cruiser *Defense*, commanded by Mr. Harding, left Plymouth, and on hearing a desultory cannonading to the north made all sail in that direction. Toward evening she met four American schooners which reported that they had had a running fight with two heavy British transports, which escaped into Nantasket Roads. The American vessels were the Massachusetts State cruiser *Lee* of eight guns, under the orders of Daniel Waters, and three privateers. Having arranged a plan of attack with the commanders of the schooners Mr. Harding ran into the Roads, and about eleven o'clock anchored between the two transports within pistol shot. After hailing he ordered them to strike. A voice from one of the transports was heard in reply, "Aye, aye—I'll strike," and immediately a broadside was poured into the *Defense*. The Americans promptly responded, and for more than an hour they were engaged in a sharp cannonade, when the enemy surrendered. The prizes were found to contain about two hundred regular soldiers of the 71st regiment, and among the prisoners was Lieutenant Campbell, commander of the troops. In this affair the *De-*

fense had nine men wounded besides suffering considerably in her rigging. The transports had eighteen men killed and many wounded, among the former being Major Menzies, the officer who answered the hail as narrated. On the following morning the Americans gave chase to a suspicious sail in the offing, and soon overhauled another transport with one hundred men from the same regiment. Thus three hundred men from one of the best English regiments were captured by these little cruisers.

The following account of an audacious attack on British transports is given by Allen in his Battles of the British Navy: "On the 23d of November a small fleet of transports under convoy of the frigate *Tartar* arrived off Boston, and with the exception of two safely entered the port. The ship *Hunter* and a brig, owing to a shift in the wind, were obliged to anchor outside the harbor, which being observed by two American privateers that had been following the convoy, they in the most daring manner attacked and boarded them, setting them on fire. A signal was immediately made for the *Raven* to weigh anchor and go in chase, but Lieutenant John Bourmaster, who had been appointed to protect Boston Lighthouse, then under repair, and who was in command of an armed transport, on observing the privateers fire upon the *Hunter*, set sail and reached the transports in time to save them from destruction."

The vessels fitted out by the order of General Washington were the *Hancock*, commanded by John Manley, the first and second officers being Richard Stiles and Nicholas Ogilby; the *Lee*, commanded by Daniel Waters, the first and second officers being William Kissick and John Gill, while the master was John Desmond; the *Franklin*, commanded by Samuel Tucker, his first and second officers being Edward Phittiplace and Francis Salter; the *Harrison*, commanded by Charles Dyar, the first and second officers being Thomas Dote and John Wigglesworth; the *Lynch*,

commanded by John Ayers, the first and second officers being John Roche and John Tiley; and the *Warren*, commanded by William Burke. Elbridge Gerry in a letter to John Adams gives an account of a cruise of the *Lynch*, commanded by Nicholas Broughton, and the *Franklin*, commanded by John Selman, in the fall of 1775. The *Lynch* mounted six 4-pounders and ten swivels. "These vessels," he wrote, "were ordered to the St. Lawrence to intercept an ammunition vessel bound for Quebec, but missing her they took ten other vessels and Governor Wright of St. Johns. All of the vessels were released, as we had waged a ministerial war and not one against our most gracious Sovereign." On the 14th of November, 1775, Clement Lempriere was appointed commander of the ship *Prosper*, which was being fitted out for South Carolina, and on the 11th of the same month the South Carolina State schooner *Defense*, while sinking some hulks in Hog Island Creek, Charleston Harbor, was fired on by the British 16-gun ship *Tamar* and the 6-gun schooner *Cherokee*. On the 21st of December, 1775, North Carolina authorized the equipment of three armed vessels for the protection of its trade, and on the 20th of December authorized the arming of the sloop *Sally* for the defense of the East River. Virginia also established a Board of Commissioners to superintend her naval affairs. In October, 1775, two floating batteries, constructed in the Charles River and propelled by sweeps, opened fire on Boston and damaged several houses besides causing considerable alarm. The batteries were constructed of heavy planks pierced for oars and musketry, and a heavy gun was at each end, while four swivels were on top.

As Lake Champlain at the time of the American Revolution afforded the only means of inland communication between the rebelling colonies and Canada, that water course became a point of great importance, and each side made early preparations to control it.

On the 11th of October, 1776, the opposing naval forces on this lake met to give battle. The American squadron, under the command of General Benedict Arnold, consisted of the 12-gun schooner *Royal Savage*, the 10-gun sloop *Enterprise*, the 8-gun schooner *Revenge*, the 8-gun galley *Trumbull*, the 8-gun galley *Congress*, the 8-gun galley *Washington*, the 6-gun galley *Lee*, the 5-gun gondola *Spitfire*, the 5-gun gondola *Connecticut*, the 3-gun gondola *New Haven*, the 3-gun gondola *Providence*, the 3-gun gondola *Boston*, the 3-gun gondola *Philadelphia*, the 3-gun gondola *Jersey* and the 3-gun gondola *New York*.



The Royal Savage, showing the "grand Union flag" (from an old water color).

This made a total of fifteen vessels mounting eighty-eight guns, the regular complement of which was eight hundred and eleven men, but at the time of the engagement not over seven hundred were on duty. The greater portion of these men were troops drafted from the regiments at Ticonderoga and were unfitted for water service. General Arnold, writing before the battle, describes them as follows: "They are a miserable set; indeed, the men on board the fleet in general are not equal to half their number of good men." In another letter he writes: "We have a wretched, motley crew in the fleet. The marines are the refuse of every regiment, and the seamen, few of them were ever wet with salt water." The officers of the fleet were army officers, while the vessels themselves were never intended for serious fighting.

The British squadron, commanded by Captain Pringle, was far better manned and equipped. Three of the vessels, the *Inflexible*, the *Maria* and the *Carleton*, built in England, were taken to pieces in the St. Lawrence and transported to Lake Champlain, reconstructed at St. Johns and fitted for service on the lake; while the other vessels were constructed under the "immediate inspection of" an English naval officer. The *Inflexible*, a ship of more than three hundred tons burden, manned by sailors from the royal navy, alone was sufficient to destroy the entire American flotilla. According to English accounts their squadron consisted of the following vessels: The 14-gun schooner *Maria* (flagship), Lieutenant Starke; the 18-gun ship *Inflexible*, Lieutenant Schank; the 12-gun schooner *Carleton*, Lieutenant Dacres; the 14-gun radeau *Thunderer*, Lieutenant Scott; the 7-gun gondola *Loyal Convert*, Lieutenant Longcraft; twenty gunboats each carrying a brass fieldpiece from 24 to 9-pounders; four large boats mounting one carriage gun each; twenty-four long boats with stores and provisions; making a total of eighty-nine guns. Lieutenant Dacres of the *Carleton* was the father of James R. Dacres, the commander of the *Guerrière* when captured by the *Constitution* in 1812.

"This flotilla was manned by a detachment of seamen from the King's ship and transports at Quebec. Their numbers amounted to eight officers, nineteen petty officers and six hundred and seventy picked seamen,"[1] making in all six hundred and ninety-seven men from the regular navy. One hundred of these men were taken from the *Isis*, seventy from the *Blood*, sixty from the *Triton*, thirty from the *Garland*, forty from the *Canceau*, eighteen from the *Magdalen*, *Brunswick* and *Gasper*, ninety from the *Treasury* and several armed brigs, thirty from the *Fell*, nine from the *Char-*

[1] Schomberg's History of the British Navy, vol. iv, pp. 323-324.

lotte, two hundred and fourteen from transports, while nine were volunteers. Besides this there were several hundred Indian allies, together with a detachment of regular troops. Among the English officers was Edward Pellew, afterward Admiral Viscount Exmouth, one of England's naval heroes.

Early on the morning of October 11th the enemy's ships were discovered passing Cumberland Head, and Arnold for the first time learned that he had a ship of three hundred tons to oppose, but, undaunted by this, that intrepid officer made ready to receive the attack. He moored his vessels in a small bay on the west side of Valcour Island, as near together as possible, and in such a form that few vessels would be exposed to the fire of the whole fleet. A strong northerly wind was blowing, and, as it was not until the British squadron had passed to the south of Valcour Island that they discovered the Americans, it was impossible for their heavy ships to beat back within range; but by eleven o'clock[1] their gunboats, with the aid of their sweeps and the *Carleton*, came within gunshot and began a heavy cannonading. By some mishap the *Royal Savage* and the galleys had drifted beyond the support of the American line and sustained the attack of the gunboats alone. One of the masts of the *Royal Savage* was wounded and her rigging was shot away so as to render her unmanageable, and she was run aground on Valcour Island, where her men es-



A, American battle line; B, British gunboats; C, the larger English vessels; D, where the *Royal Savage* was burned; E, Cumberland Head; F, Plattsburgh; G, Grand Island.

[1] Official report of General Arnold.

caped. During the night she was burned by the enemy.[1]

General Arnold in his official report says: "At half past twelve the engagement became general and very warm. Some of the enemy's ships and all their gondolas beat and rowed up within musket shot of us. They continued a very hot fire with round and grapeshot until five o'clock, when they thought proper to retire to about six or seven hundred yards' distance and continued the fire till dark." The retreat of the British gunboats is explained by Lieutenant James Murray Hadden, who commanded them, as follows: "It was found that the [gun] boats' advantage was not to come nearer than seven hundred yards, as whenever they approached nearer they were greatly annoyed by grapeshot, though their case shot could do little mischief." During the battle the Indian allies of the British fired on the American flotilla from the woods and caused serious annoyance. "These savages," said Lieutenant Hadden, "under Major Carleton, moved with the fleet in their canoes, which were very regularly ranged. On the day of the battle, the rebels having no land force, the savages took post on the mainland and on Valcour Island. Thus being upon both flanks they were able to annoy them in the working of their guns. This had the effect of now and then obliging the rebels to turn a gun that way, which danger the savages avoided by getting behind trees."

About five o'clock Captain Pringle, having made several unsuccessful attempts to bring his larger ships into action, gave the signal of recall and anchored his fleet in a line just out of gunshot, intending to renew the action on the morrow. "The *Thunderer* lay at the right of the line, a little south of Garden Island, the schooner *Maria* on the left near the mainland,

[1] She sank near the present site of Hotel Champlain. Her hull can be seen at low water.

while the *Loyal Convert* and the *Inflexible* occupied intermediate positions. The *Carleton* and gunboats were anchored near the other vessels."[1]

In this first day's fight General Arnold commanded the *Congress*, and he fought with characteristic courage. Toward the end of the action he pointed almost every gun with his own hands and cheered his men by his example. His flagship received seven shot between wind and water; she was hulled twelve times, and her mainmast was wounded in two places and the yard in one place. The *Washington* was commanded by General Waterbury, who fought on the quarter-deck of his ship with conspicuous bravery, and at the end of the action he was the only officer on duty, the first lieutenant, the captain and the master being killed. His ship was hulled several times, and her mainmast was so injured as to require a new one. Both the *Congress* and the *Washington* were leaking badly. The *Trumbull*, commanded by Colonel Wigglesworth, was severely damaged, while the *New York* lost all of her officers except her commander, Captain Lee; and the *Philadelphia*, Captain Grant, was so riddled with shot that she sank one hour after the engagement. General Arnold in his official report places the total loss to the Americans in the first day's action at "about sixty." On the part of the English, eight men were killed and six wounded in the *Carleton*, while two of their gunboats were sunk and one was blown up with a number of men aboard. Captain Pringle reported that his losses did not "amount to forty."

Having expended three fourths of his ammunition and "being sensible of the inferiority of his force,"[2] General Arnold determined to steal through the English line at night, in hopes of reaching Crown Point. At seven o'clock in the evening Colonel Wigglesworth

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[1] Palmer's History of Lake Champlain.

[2] Schomberg's History of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 431.

began the retreat with the *Trumbull* and directed her course toward the upper end of the lake. He was followed by the *Enterprise* and the *Lee* with the gondolas, and about ten o'clock General Waterbury started in the *Washington*, followed by General Arnold in the *Congress*. In this order, with a light at the stern of each vessel, the squadron passed to Schuyler Island, about nine miles distant, where it arrived early next morning. General Arnold now found that two of the gondolas were so badly injured that he sunk them, and having fitted up the other vessels as well as his limited time and means would allow he again made sail for Crown Point.



Lake Champlain.

The enemy discovered the escape on the following morning and immediately set out in pursuit. Thursday, October 12th, was taken up with the chase, and it was not until noon of the 13th, just after Arnold's vessels had passed Split Rock, that the enemy again came within gunshot. By this time the American vessels were much scattered, and the crews also had become so reduced in numbers that the officers were compelled to load and point the guns with their own hands. The *Congress* and the *Washington* now made a rally to cover the flight of the remaining vessels. The latter was attacked by the *Maria*, commanded by Captain Pringle in person, and the *Inflexible*, and struck after a few shot had been exchanged. General Waterbury and his surviving men were taken prisoners. These

two English vessels then joined the *Carleton* in the pursuit of the *Congress*, and for two hours they kept up a running fight. When about ten miles from Crown Point General Arnold was so hard pressed that he ran the *Congress* and four gondolas into Panton Bay, on the east side of the lake, and after removing all the small arms he destroyed the vessels and escaped with his men in the woods, and then made his way to Crown Point. Two hours afterward the woods at this point were filled by the Indian allies of the English, who would have made Arnold's escape more hazardous. In the meantime the *Enterprise*, the *Revenge*, the *Trumbull* and one gondola had reached places of safety, while the galley *Lee*, Captain Davis, ran in a bay on the east side of the lake above Split Rock, where she was blown up. The only vessels the enemy captured were the *Washington* and the gondola *Jersey*. In the second day's fight the *Congress* lost her first lieutenant and three men. The total American loss in killed or wounded in the two days' fight was "eighty odd,"[1] while that of the English was "about forty."[2]

One great disadvantage under which the Americans labored was that of having several different calibers in the same vessel. The *Washington*, for instance, was armed with one 18-pounder, one 12-pounder, two 9-pounders and six 4-pounders, which caused great confusion in loading the guns, and in the excitement of action seriously detracted from her efficiency. Each English vessel, on the other hand, had the same caliber throughout its armament—the *Thunderer* alone excepted, she having six 24-pounders, six 12-pounders and two howitzers. Sir Guy Carleton treated his prisoners with great kindness, ordering that the American wounded should receive the same attention as the English. On the 14th of October they were accompa-

[1] Official report of General Arnold.
[2] Official report of Captain Pringle.

nied to Ticonderoga by Captain (afterward Sir James) Craigh, where they were released on parole.

Comparative force and loss.

	Vessels.	Guns.	Men.	Loss.
American flotilla:	15	88	700	"80 odd."
British flotilla:	25	89	1000	"About 40."

The results of this naval engagement, notwithstanding the defeat of Arnold's flotilla, were highly advantageous to the cause of the colonists. It convinced the enemy that the Americans were in earnest, and, what was more, knew how to fight—a point which had been gravely debated at British mess-tables and in London drawing-rooms. Sir Guy Carleton occupied Crown Point, which had been abandoned and destroyed by the Americans after the naval engagement, and on the 27th of October he advanced against Ticonderoga, but after exchanging a few shot he retreated to Crown Point, and on the 3d of November took up the march for winter quarters in Canada.

During the year 1776 British commerce suffered heavy losses at the hands of American cruisers and privateers. The London Remembrancer of that period declared that the damage to the West India trade alone amounted to nearly two million dollars. The total number of vessels captured by the Americans in 1776 was three hundred and forty-two, of which forty-four were recaptured, eighteen released, and five were burned.

CHAPTER IV.

THE AMERICAN NAVY IN EUROPE.

NOTHING better illustrates the spirit and patriotism of the colonists than the manner in which they carried the war for independence into the enemy's country. When England determined to coerce the refractory Americans she little thought that she was inviting danger to her own doors, her idea of an American war being a somewhat expensive transportation of German mercenaries across the Atlantic, where the dispute would be settled in a wilderness, far removed from any possible chance of interference with British interests in other parts of the world. The British merchant looked forward to the war with no small degree of complacency, for in spite of the provisions of the Navigation Acts, which were designed especially to protect him from colonial competition, he already keenly felt American rivalry for the carrying trade of the world. It would cost several million pounds annually to send Hessians to America, but this would be more than made good by the British merchant securing the colonist's share of commerce.

This was the view generally taken by Englishmen before hostilities began; but had they anticipated that American cruisers would cross the Atlantic and throw their coasts into continual alarm, that their shipping even in their own harbors would be in danger, that it would be unsafe for peers of the realm to remain at their country seats, that British commerce would be almost annihilated and that sixteen thousand British seamen would be captured, they would have entered

upon a coercive policy with far greater hesitancy. Without her ships and seamen England would be reduced to one of the least of the European powers, and while she could afford to lose a few thousand Hessians, the loss of her maritime ascendancy touched her to the quick.

American naval enterprise in European waters during the Revolution, from the appearance of the first American war vessel to the cruise of the squadron under Captain John Paul Jones, was unexampled in daring and success. The first American cruiser to show herself on the other side of the Atlantic was the 16-gun brig *Reprisal*, Captain Lambert Wickes. Early in the summer of 1776 this little vessel was dispatched to Martinique for the purpose of transporting military stores to America. When nearing her port she was attacked by the 16-gun sloop of war *Shark*, Captain Chapman, but after a severe action she succeeded in driving her assailant off and resumed her course. In the autumn of 1776 the *Reprisal* was placed under the command of Captain Lambert Wickes, who received orders to convey Dr. Franklin to France. Taking two prizes on the passage over, the *Reprisal* reached Nantes and landed her distinguished passenger in safety. Here she refitted and sailed for the Bay of Biscay, where she captured two vessels, one of which was the King's packet plying between Falmouth and Lisbon. When



European waters.

these prizes were brought to Nantes the English agents protested so vehemently that great caution became necessary in disposing of them, and they were secretly taken into the offing and sold to French merchants. The proceeds were handed over to the American commissioners in Europe and materially assisted them in their negotiations in behalf of the struggling colonies.

These commissioners, from the first, urged the advisability of stationing a naval force near the coasts of Great Britain. "We have not the least doubt," wrote Dr. Franklin, "but that two or three of the Continental frigates sent into the German Ocean, with some less swift-sailing cruisers, might intercept and seize a great part of the Baltic and Northern trade. . . . One frigate would be sufficient to destroy the whole of the Greenland whale-fishery or take the Hudson Bay ships returning."

The Marine Committee acted on this advice, and in April, 1777, the *Reprisal* was joined by the *Lexington*, Captain Henry Johnston. The American agents also purchased a 10-gun cutter called the *Dolphin*, which was placed under the orders of Lieutenant Samuel Nicholson, brother of Captain James Nicholson. In June this little squadron, under command of Captain Lambert Wickes, sailed from Nantes and ventured in British waters. After a short cruise in the Bay of Biscay the vessels made two circuits of Ireland, causing great havoc in the enemy's commerce and alarming the entire coast. After securing fifteen prizes the cruisers returned to France, but when nearing the coast they were chased by a British line of battle ship, and the *Reprisal* was so hard pressed that she was obliged to saw away her bulwarks and some of her timbers, besides throwing her guns overboard. When the ships regained port the captures were clandestinely disposed of to French merchants. This aroused a greater storm of opposition from the English agents than before, and, as the King had not openly declared war, some appear-

ance of neutrality had to be made in order to avoid actual hostilities. The *Reprisal* and the *Lexington* accordingly were held until security was given that they would quit France, while the prizes were ordered to leave port. The latter were taken into the offing and sold as before.

According to the agreement, the *Lexington* refitted and sailed from Morlaix on the 18th of September. The second day out she fell in with the British man-of-war *Alert*, Lieutenant Bazely (afterward Admiral), of "ten guns, ten swivels and sixty men."[1] The vessels immediately closed and began a heavy cannonade, which was maintained with great spirit for two hours and a half, but the high sea and the lightness of the craft rendered the fire less effective. So unprepared were the Americans for battle that at first no matches were ready, and several broadsides were fired by discharging muskets at the vents of the cannon. The *Lexington* also had sailed with a short supply of powder and shot. At the end of two and a half hours of cannonading the *Lexington* had crippled her antagonist's rigging, but in so doing had used up nearly all of her powder. Captain Johnston then took advantage of his opponent's condition and by setting all sail drew out of range, but the *Alert* repaired her injuries and after a chase of four hours succeeded in getting alongside. The *Lexington* soon used up the remainder of her ammunition and forthwith a one-sided action ensued. For an hour the Americans received the fire in silence, hoping some accident would befall the enemy's rigging, but at the end of that time, seeing that further resistance was useless—his first lieutenant, marine officer and sailing master being killed and many of his men wounded—Captain Johnston hauled down his flag. The *Lexington* was armed with sixteen 4-pounders. The *Alert*, according to English accounts, lost

[1] Schomberg's History of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 440.

two killed and three wounded. The *Lexington* was taken to Plymouth, and her men were thrown into Mill Prison on a charge of high treason. Here they were treated with great brutality, and on one occasion they were so reduced by want of food that they killed a stray dog, cooked it and ate it with a relish. After some months of imprisonment the Americans effected their escape by digging a hole under the prison, carrying away the dirt from day to day in their pockets, and got aboard a vessel in London bound for Dunkirk, when they were discovered by a press-gang and returned to prison. About a year later Richard Dale, who had been master's mate in the *Lexington*, made his escape by boldly walking past the guards in broad daylight, dressed in a British uniform. Dale refused to reveal how he secured this dress to the day of his death. The *Reprisal*, which sailed soon after the *Lexington*, foundered off the Banks of Newfoundland on her homeward passage and all hands but one perished.

The loss of the *Lexington* and the *Reprisal* left the other side of the Atlantic without an American war vessel, but the results of Captain Wickes' cruises were so encouraging that our commissioners immediately took measures to secure other vessels. In the spring of 1777 an agent was sent to Dover to purchase a fast-sailing vessel, and a cutter was brought over to Dunkirk, where she was equipped and armed as a vessel of war under the name of the *Surprise*.

The character of these vessels fitted out in Europe has been misunderstood by English writers and by some American historians. The president of the Continental Congress, John Hancock, had authorized the American commissioners in Europe to purchase and fit out such craft as the *Surprise* for the purpose of preying on the commerce of Great Britain, and, in order that these vessels might sail in the capacity of national cruisers, blank commissions were placed in the hands of our representatives, to be filled out at their discretion.

Such a commission, dated March 1, 1777, issued by Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane, was filled out for Captain Gustavus Connyngham, commander of the *Surprise*, authorizing him to sail as a captain in the American navy, and investing the *Surprise* with all the requisites of a national cruiser, so far as the Americans were concerned.

Having made up a crew Captain Connyngham sailed from Dunkirk on the 1st of May, but it was only by a good deal of intrigue that the *Surprise* was enabled to get to sea. Captain Connyngham "took his arms out of his ship and said he should load it with merchandise for one of the ports in Norway. As this declaration was suspected, security was demanded. Two persons, Hodge and Allen, became responsible for him. Connyngham actually left the port of Dunkirk without arms, but he caused sailors, cannon and ammunition to be sent out to him in the night while he was in the ship's Road off Dunkirk. As soon as this manœuvre came to the knowledge of the French Government, Hodge, one of the securities, was arrested and conducted to the Bastille, and the prize, which the *Surprise* soon afterward captured, was returned to the British Government without the form of a process. After six weeks of confinement Hodge was released."[1]

The third day after leaving Dunkirk Captain Connyngham gave chase to a sail and soon overhauled the British merchant ship *Joseph*, after which he cruised along the coast of Holland until the 7th, when he fell in with the English packet *Prince of Orange*. The presence of an American cruiser in these waters was so unexpected that it was not until Captain Connyngham had run alongside and boarded that the Englishman realized that he was in the presence of a hostile vessel. Knowing that the Channel was frequented by British cruisers and believing that the packet contained valu-

[1] Sparks' Diplomatic Correspondence, vol. i, p. 292, note.

able dispatches, Captain Connyngham returned to Dunkirk.

On hearing of this capture the English ambassador threatened to leave the country if the *Surprise* and her prize were not immediately given up. As France was not prepared for war the ministers were constrained to seize the vessels and imprison Captain Connyngham and his men. Not satisfied with this the British Government demanded that these men should be given up to be tried as pirates, and sent over two sloops of war for the purpose of taking them to England; but before the sloops arrived Captain Connyngham had sailed on another expedition.

The American agents were indefatigable in their efforts to replace the *Surprise* and soon secured another cutter, the *Revenge*, carrying fourteen 6-pounders and twenty-two swivels with one hundred and six men, and Captain Connyngham and his men, having been released "with some address and intrigue,"[1] managed to get to sea in her. The *Revenge* proved a remarkably successful vessel, taking prizes daily, many of which were sent to Spain and sold to merchants; the proceeds thus realized affording much-needed assistance to the American commissioners in urging the cause of the colonies before the French ministry and in furthering their operations against the British Government. The money advanced to Mr. Adams for traveling expenses when he landed in Spain from the French frigate *la Sensible*, a year or two later, was derived from this source. The *Revenge* was now in need of repairs, and fearing to take her into a French port lest she might again be detained, Captain Connyngham resorted to one of those daring expedients for which the American navy is renowned. Disguising his cutter as well as his limited stores would allow, he boldly entered an English port, thoroughly refitted, and sailed again without arousing the first

[1] Silas Deane to Robert Morris, August 23, 1777.

suspicion as to his identity. Encouraged by this he shortly afterward entered an Irish port, where he laid in a full supply of provisions, paid for them with bills on his agents in Spain, and again sailed unmolested. The audacity of these exploits will be better understood when we remember that by this time Captain Connyngham and his cutter had obtained wide notoriety in Great Britain, especially among the seafaring classes. The *Revenge* continued her depredation on the enemy's commerce for several weeks after this, when, having made a cruise of unprecedented success, she refitted in Ferrol and sailed for America.

The daring and success of these several expeditions along the enemy's coasts struck terror into the heart of the British merchant. Mr. Deane wrote: "It effectually alarmed England, prevented the great fair at Chester, occasioned insurance to rise, and even deterred the English merchant from shipping goods in English bottoms at any rate of insurance, so that in a few weeks forty sail of French ships were loading in the Thames on freight—an instance never before known. . . . In a word, Connyngham, by his first and second bold expeditions, is become the terror of all the eastern coast of England and Scotland, and is more dreaded than Thurot was in the late war." The English ministry denounced the character of the *Surprise* and *Revenge* as piratical, and demanded that Captain Connyngham, as the commander of such vessels, should be given over to the British authorities. In the following year he was captured, and treated with such severity that Congress, by a resolution of July 17, 1778, formally demanded the reason for his being "treated in a manner contrary to all the dictates of humanity and the practice of civilized nations," and in case of an unsatisfactory answer the Marine Committee was ordered to "immediately cause to be confined, in close and safe custody, such and so many persons as they may think proper in order to abide the fate of said Gustavus

Connyngham." On the 13th of the following December one Christopher Hale was detained from an exchange of prisoners, Congress declaring that he would suffer the fate of Captain Connyngham.

The loss of the *Surprise* and the departure of the *Revenge* for America did not check American enterprise in European waters. Toward the latter part of August, 1777, the 32-gun frigate *Raleigh*, Captain Thomas Thompson, and the 24-gun ship *Alfred*, Captain Elisha Hinman, sailed in company for France to transport military supplies for the American army and to harass the enemy's commerce. On the 2d of September they overhauled a small vessel named the *Nancy*, and from her master learned that she had been separated only the day before from the outward bound Windward Island fleet, which was under the protection of the 20-gun ship *Camel*, the 14-gun brig *Druid*, the 14-gun brig *Grasshopper* and the 16-gun sloop *Weasel*. Having ascertained from the people in the *Nancy* the positions of these war vessels in the fleet, and also their private signals, Captain Thompson made sail to bring up with them. About noon on the following day, September 3d, while in latitude 40° 33′ north, longitude 50° 17′ west, the fleet was descried from the *Raleigh's* masthead. Gradually approaching until he could make out the exact positions of the escorts, Captain Thompson, using the enemy's code, signaled the *Alfred* as if she were one of the merchantmen, and awaiting the cover of night he bore down on his consort and ordered her to follow his movements. After manœuvring until break of day in a vain endeavor to separate some of the ships from the fleet Captain Thompson resolved to leave the *Alfred*, as she was a dull sailer, and go into the fleet alone. This plan was carried out in a most audacious manner, the *Raleigh* giving orders to the merchantmen as she passed and answering the British commander's signals just as if she were one of the convoy. The English were completely deceived and continued peace-

fully on their course, ignorant of the presence of an enemy.

Taking advantage of this, Captain Thompson carefully worked his way through the fleet until he had secured a position to windward of the *Druid*, when, having edged up to a favorable quarter, he suddenly threw open his ports, ran out a row of sixteen guns and poured in a broadside of round and grapeshot upon the astounded enemy. In the twinkling of an eye the innocent-looking merchant ship had been changed into a powerful frigate, and for twenty minutes she hurled broadside after broadside into the unfortunate Englishmen, who were scarcely able to fire a shot in return. Consternation and confusion reigned throughout the fleet, and the ships crowded sail in every direction to escape not only from the *Raleigh* but from each other, for now broadsides were expected from every quarter. Finally discovering that the cause of the panic was but a single ship, the British vessels of war, together with several heavily armed merchantmen, made sail to rescue the *Druid*. Captain Thompson continued his storm of round shot, grape and canister until the enemy was nearly upon him, when he hauled off and rejoined the *Alfred* on the outskirts of the fleet. Here the two cruisers remained some time, hoping for another opportunity to attack, but as none presented itself they resumed their course for France.

The *Druid* was a complete wreck; her masts, rigging and sails were cut to pieces, and five feet of water was in her hold, so that she was compelled to return to England. Captain Carteret, her commander, was so dangerously wounded that he was carried below, and by the same shot the master was killed. The enemy's loss was six killed and twenty-six wounded,[1] while the *Raleigh* sustained only trifling injury, her loss in killed or wounded being three.

[1] Official report of Captain Carteret.

Arriving in France the *Raleigh* and the *Alfred* loaded with military stores, and in February, 1778, sailed from L'Orient for America, taking a southerly course in the expectation of falling in with English merchantmen. On the 9th of March, while they were pursuing an uneventful voyage, two sails were discovered which proved to be English ships of war. The *Alfred* was the first to make them out, the *Raleigh* being hull down to leeward, and before the American cruisers could come together, the *Alfred*, being a "tender-sided ship," was overtaken and captured. Seeing the fate of his consort and knowing that the stores with which his ship was laden were of great value to the American army, Captain Thompson made all sail before the wind to escape, and although the enemy gave chase the fine sailing qualities of the *Raleigh* enabled her to run them out of sight. The British vessels were the *Ariadne* of twenty guns and the *Ceres* of fourteen. Captain Thompson was severely criticised for abandoning the *Alfred*, and soon afterward was relieved of his command and ordered to await trial.

The temerity of American privateers in their operations off the coasts of Great Britain was unparalleled. An instance of it is quaintly described in a private letter of that day as follows: "An American privateer of twelve guns came into this road (Guernsey) yesterday morning, tacked about on the firing of the guns from the Castle, and just off the Island took a large brig bound for this port which they have since carried into Cherbourg. She had the impudence to send her boat in the dusk of the evening to a little island off here called Jetto and unluckily carried off the lieutenant of Northley's Independent Company here with the adjutant, who were shooting rabbits for their diversion. The brig they took is valued at seven thousand pounds." The English Government was obliged to furnish convoys even for the Irish coast trade. "An escort for linen ships from Newry and Dublin, and from

Dublin to England, was requested and given."[1] "In no former war, not even in any of the wars with France and Spain, the linen vessels from Ireland were convoyed."[2]

English trade to the West India Islands also suffered great losses. An English correspondent writing from Jamaica, May 2, 1777, said that in one week upward of fourteen English ships were carried into Martinique. Another Englishman, writing from Grenada, April 18, 1777, said: "Everything continues excessively dear here, and we are happy if we can get anything for money by reason of the quantity of vessels that are taken by American privateers. A fleet of vessels came from Ireland a few days ago. From sixty vessels that departed from Ireland not above twenty-five arrived in this and neighboring islands, the others (it is thought) being all taken by the American privateers. God knows if this American war continues much longer we shall all die with hunger. There was a Guineaman that came from Africa with four hundred and fifty negroes, some thousand weight of gold dust and a great many elephant teeth; the whole cargo being computed to be worth twenty thousand pounds sterling, taken by an American privateer, a brig mounting fourteen cannon, a few days ago."

The number of British vessels captured by the Americans during the year 1777 was four hundred and sixty-seven.

We now come to the first of the famous cruises of Captain John Paul Jones off the coasts of Great Britain. The American commissioners in Europe had ordered one of the heaviest single-decked frigates that up to that time had been built to be constructed in Holland. She was called the *Indien*, but afterward her name was changed to *South Carolina*, and she was armed on her

[1] Admiralty to London merchants.

[2] London Remembrancer, vol. v, p. 144.

main deck with Swedish 36-pounders. It was proposed to send over a party of American officers and sailors to France in the French letter of marque *Amphitrite*, which had recently arrived in America with stores from Europe, and, by making a transfer of property, man the *Indien* and send her into British waters under the American flag. Owing to some difficulty in the matter of the transfer the plan fell through, and Captain Jones, who was to have commanded her, was ordered to the 18-gun ship *Ranger*.

As English writers have asserted that in his operations off the British coasts Captain Jones acted merely in the capacity of a privateersman, it will be necessary at the outset to show that he served as a naval officer and was duly authorized to command the regular cruiser of the United States:

"PHILADELPHIA, *May 9, 1777.*

"JOHN PAUL JONES, Esq.

"SIR: Congress have thought proper to employ you on a voyage in the *Amphitrite*, from Portsmouth to Carolina and France, where it is expected you will be provided with a fine frigate; and as your present commission is for the command of a particular ship, we now send you a new one, whereby you are appointed a captain in our navy, and of course may command any ship in the service to which you are particularly ordered. You are to obey the orders of the Secret Committee. Sir, &c.

"[Signed] JOHN HANCOCK,
ROBERT MORRIS,
WILLIAM WHIPPLE."

The *Ranger* sailed from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on the 1st of November. Captain Jones complained that he could obtain but one barrel of rum for his crew, that the vessel had only one set of sails, and some of those were made of inferior cloth, that his

stores were short, and that the ship in every respect was poorly equipped. This complaint was undoubtedly well grounded, but it was under such difficulties that nearly every American commander took to the sea in the struggle for independence. The *Ranger* arrived at Nantes on the 2d of December, having captured, on the passage over, two prizes, and was once chased by a two-decker. From Nantes Captain Jones convoyed a number of American merchantmen to Quiberon Bay (a few miles to the north), and placed them under the protection of the French fleet commanded by Admiral Le Motte Piquet. From this officer Captain Jones, after considerable negotiation, secured a salute to the Stars and Stripes. Captain Jones describes this diplomatic triumph in a style peculiarly his own, as follows: "I am happy to have it in my power to congratulate you [the American Commissioners at Paris] on my having seen the American flag for the first time recognized in the fullest and completest manner by the flag of France. I was off this bay on the 13th inst., and sent my boat in the next day to know if the admiral would return my salute. He answered that he would return to me as the senior American Continental officer in Europe the same salute as he was authorized to return to an admiral of Holland, or any other republic, which was four guns less than the salute given. I hesitated at this, for I demanded gun for gun. Therefore I anchored in the entrance to the bay at some distance from the French fleet, but after a very particular inquiry on the 14th, finding that he really told the truth, I was induced to accept his offer; the more as it was an acknowledgment of American independence. The wind being contrary and blowing hard, it was after sunset before the *Ranger* was near enough to salute Le Motte Piquet with thirteen guns, which he returned with nine. However, to put the matter beyond a doubt, I did not suffer the *Independence* to salute until the next morning, when I sent word to the

admiral that I would sail through his fleet in the brig and would salute him in open day. He was exceedingly pleasant, and returned the compliment also with nine guns."

Having refitted at Brest, the *Ranger* sailed on the 10th of April, 1778, for the English coast, and on the 14th, while between the Scilly Islands and Cape Clear, captured and destroyed a brigantine laden with flaxseed. Three days later she appeared off the port of Dublin and seized the ship *Lord Chatham*, which was manned and sent into Brest. Captain Jones then stood over to the Isle of Man with the intention of making a descent on Whitehaven. At ten o'clock that night everything was in readiness for the attempt, but before eleven o'clock the wind had so increased in violence as to render it impossible to land. On the following day the ship chased a revenue wherry but did not succeed in coming up with it. Captain Jones was anxious to have his presence in these waters unknown to the enemy as long as possible, and to this end he kept his vessel disguised as a merchantman. It was under this guise that he chased the revenue wherry, but it is believed that the men in the boat were aware of the *Ranger's* character, and carried the news to the people on shore. At dawn of the next day Captain Jones found himself alongside of a coasting schooner laden with barley, and he sunk her lest her crew should spread the news of the cruiser's presence in these parts.

The next day, while off the extreme southwestern coast of Scotland, a coasting schooner laden with barley was captured and sunk. Cruising along the coast of Scotland as high as the Clyde, Captain Jones put across for the Irish coast and on the 21st appeared off Carrickfergus, where he learned from some fishermen that the British sloop of war *Drake* was at anchor in the Roads. This was an opportunity admirably adapted to the daring of the American commander,

and, having ascertained the exact position of the sloop, he made careful preparation for a night attack. Waiting until dark he got under way and stood into the Roads, but by this time the wind, which had been fresh throughout the afternoon, had increased to a gale and made the undertaking exceedingly hazardous; but, undaunted by this, Captain Jones kept on his course. Presently the shadowy outlines of the *Drake*, riding heavily at anchor, loomed out of the darkness. It was intended to foul her at the cables, swing alongside and carry her by surprise, but "unfortunately," says Captain Jones in his Journal, "the anchor was not let go as soon as the order was given," and, instead of laying the enemy alongside, the *Ranger* was brought up half a cable's length off his quarter. This put the Americans in imminent danger of grounding, for the wind had carried them between the *Drake* and the shore, where, if found at break of day, they would be at the enemy's mercy. The perils of their situation were greatly enhanced by the strength and direction of the wind, which was now blowing a furious gale. After half an hour of manœuvring the *Ranger* was extricated from her critical position and regained



Captain Jones' cruise in the Irish Sea.

the Roads, when she stood out to sea, postponing for the time her design on the *Drake*.

Captain Jones now determined to renew his attempt against the shipping in Whitehaven, a city of nearly fifty thousand inhabitants, and to "put an end, by one good fire in England, *of shipping*, to all burnings in America."[1] Waiting until midnight, April 22d, he put off from the *Ranger* with thirty men in two boats, one commanded by himself and the other by Lieutenant Wallingford. Day was beginning to break, however, before they reached the outer pier of the harbor, where the boats separated; the one commanded by Lieutenant Wallingford making for the north side of the harbor with orders to burn all the shipping there, while Captain Jones made for the south shore with the same object in view. Lieutenant Wallingford on reaching the land abandoned the attempt, because the candle on which he relied for starting the fire gave out. The party under Captain Jones found a small fort on the south side of the harbor, garrisoned by a few soldiers. Gallantly scaling the walls, the Americans seized the sentinels, spiked the guns and made the garrison prisoners. Captain Jones then gave orders to fire the shipping, while he, with one officer, went to a second fort about a quarter of a mile away and spiked its guns also. Returning to the first fort, he was surprised to find that the fires had not been started, and was informed that the candles had given out. Notwithstanding that it was now broad daylight and that the alarm had been given, Captain Jones entered one of the houses in the neighborhood, secured tinder and candles and proceeded with the work of destruction. A large vessel was boarded and a fire kindled in her steerage, and by placing a barrel of tar over the flames they soon made great headway. This ship "was surrounded by at least an hundred and fifty others, chiefly

[1] Captain Jones in a memorial to Congress.

from two to four hundred tons burthen, and lying side by side, aground, unsurrounded by the water, the tide being out."[1]

The Americans now embarked in their boat at the end of the pier with the exception of Captain Jones, who leveled his pistol at the crowd that had collected at the other end of the wharf, and by maintaining a bold front he held them at bay until the flames burst out of the steerage and began to ascend the rigging, when he retired to his boat and gave the word to shove off. By this time the sun had been up quite an hour and the entire population was assembling at the pier. The instant the American boat put off the crowd rushed to the rescue of the shipping, and succeeded in extinguishing the flames before any considerable damage had been done. Attempts were made to fire on the retreating boat, but the guns of the forts were found to be spiked, although one or two cannon were landed from the ships and discharged. No loss was sustained by the Americans except that one of the crew was missing, and it was thought that he deserted and gave the alarm to the people, as a man of his description was seen running from house to house shouting that the Americans had landed and were firing the shipping. Captain Jones carried off three prisoners.

The Gentleman's Magazine for 1778 gives the following account of this affair: "The town of Whitehaven, in Cumberland, opposite the Irish coast, was suddenly alarmed by a party from an American privateer, who landed in the night and set fire to one of the ships in the harbor, with a design to burn the town, which, however, was providentially prevented by the exertions of the inhabitants, who extinguished the flames before they had reached the rigging."

As a means of alleviating the suffering of American prisoners, efforts were made to secure the person of some

[1] Log of the *Ranger*.

Englishman of rank, to be held as a hostage and to share the fate of certain American officers confined in British prisons.[1] Being familiar with these coasts Captain Jones determined to seize the Earl of Selkirk, a Scottish nobleman whose country seat was on the Isle of St. Mary at the mouth of the river Dee. On the night of April 23d he anchored off the Dee, a force was landed and the house surrounded, but it was found that the earl was absent. On the return of his men to the ship Captain Jones, who had not accompanied the expedition, discovered that they had taken some of the family plate, valued at five hundred dollars, which he afterward returned with a note expressing regret for the conduct of his men.

Although fully aware that the entire coast by this time was advised of his presence and that many cruisers had been dispatched to intercept him, Captain Jones still lingered in a position which was hourly growing more critical. On the 24th of April he ran over to Carrickfergus, hoping to induce the *Drake* to come out and give battle. On the afternoon of the same day Captain Burdon of the *Drake*, observing what he thought to be

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[1] The brutalities to which Americans were subjected in British prison-ships and other places of confinement had aroused great indignation throughout the United States. The following extract from the Journals of Parliament throws some light on the mode the British ministers adopted in carrying on this war:

"Mr. Burke moved an amendment by adding these words, 'saving and excepting the sum of £160,837 which appears, by Sir Guy Carleton's accounts laid before this House, to have been expended for the carrying on of a savage war in a manner contrary to the usages of the civilized nations, against the English colonies in North America; excepting also the sum of £16,000 which appears to have been expended for the same purpose in the southern department of Indians; also excepting the sum of £5,000 which hath been expended in carrying on a war of insurgent negroes against the inhabitants of the Province of Virginia; and excepting whatever hath been paid out of the said extraordinaries, specified in General Carleton's correspondence, for one hundred crosses and five gross of scalping-knives, the said expenditures being disgraceful to religion and humanity.'"—*Journals of Parliament*, vol. xix, p. 971.

the American cruiser making for the Roads, sent an officer in a boat to determine the character of the approaching vessel, but Captain Jones, surmising the mission of the boat, skillfully kept the *Ranger's* stern toward the skiff so that the enemy was unable to see her broadside. The officer soon came alongside and hailed, and being induced to come aboard was made prisoner and taken below. Believing that the commander of the *Drake* would come out in search of his men, Captain Jones filled away into North Channel, hoping the sloop would follow. The tide was against the British cruiser, so that it was several hours before she cleared the headland and was enabled to lay a straight course for the offing. In the meantime the *Ranger* kept drifting to windward, and her helm was put up several times in order to run down toward her enemy, when she would again throw her maintopsail aback and lie with her courses in the brails. Alarm smokes now appeared in great numbers on both sides of the Channel, giving notice of the presence of the *Ranger*. About an hour before sunset the *Drake* was observed slowly working her way out of the Roads, followed by five small vessels at a respectful distance filled with people eager to witness a naval engagement, while thousands of spectators lined the shores to watch the impending struggle. When the enemy was near enough to recognize the boat towing astern of the *Ranger* as the one that had been sent out early in the afternoon to reconnoiter, the small craft hurriedly put about and kept at a safe distance. Having led the *Drake* into mid-channel, in plain view of three kingdoms, Captain Jones hove to, ran up the flag of the Republic, and awaited the enemy.

On coming within hail Captain Burdon demanded the *Ranger's* name and business, to which Captain Jones replied, "The American Continental ship *Ranger*," and expressed his readiness to engage. At this moment, the *Drake* being astern of the *Ranger*, Cap-

tain Jones ordered his helm up and poured in a full broadside. The enemy promptly responded, and with little or no manœuvring the ships maintained a heavy cannonade for one hour and four minutes. The action was a square yardarm and yardarm fight, and was continued with great spirit until the expiration of that time, when the enemy called for quarter, upon which the *Ranger* ceased firing, lowered a boat and sent it aboard the *Drake* to take possession. The latter was found to be greatly injured. "Her fore and maintopsail yards," said Captain Jones in his official report, "being both cut away and down on the caps, the topgallant yard and mizzen gaff both hanging up and down along the mast, the second ensign which they had hoisted shot away and hanging on the quarter gallery in the water, the jib shot away and hanging in the water, her sails and rigging entirely cut to pieces, her masts and yards all wounded and her hull very much galled."

The *Ranger's* injuries were comparatively slight, while her loss, out of a crew of one hundred and twenty-three men,[1] was Lieutenant Wallingford and one man killed, and six men wounded,[2] among the latter being Midshipman Powers. "The crew of the *Drake* was more numerous than has been generally supposed. The exact number borne upon her books at the time of the action, including officers, supernumeraries and boys, was one hundred and fifty-one."[3] Captain Jones learned from the officer captured in the boat sent out before the battle to reconnoiter that the *Drake* came out with volunteers against the *Ranger*. It is not likely that these volunteers for this special and unexpected occasion of a single battle would be regularly enrolled on the *Drake's* books, which, together

[1] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 44.

[2] Official report of Captain Jones.

[3] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 262, note.



The Ranger and the Drake.

with the one hundred and fifty-one admitted to have been engaged as her crew at the time of the action, makes Captain Jones' estimate of the enemy's force highly probable: "All the prisoners allow that they came out with a number not less than an hundred and sixty men, and many of them affirm that they amounted to an hundred and ninety. The medium may, perhaps, be the most exact account." Out of this crew the *Drake* lost forty-two killed or wounded, according to American accounts, while the English admit twenty-four.[1] Among the mortally wounded were Captain Burdon and his lieutenant, the former struck by a musket shot in the head. The *Ranger* carried eighteen guns,[2] while the *Drake* was rated as an 18-gun ship-sloop, but on this occasion carried twenty guns.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Ranger:	18	123	2	6	8	Time 1h. 4m.
Drake:	20	160	..	..	42	

The moderate weather during the night enabled the men to repair damages, which occupied them until daylight and the whole of the afternoon of the following day, April 25th, and having sunk a large brigantine in the meantime the *Ranger* with her prize got under way about dusk. Captain Jones now liberated the fishermen he had captured, giving them money, a boat, provisions and a sail from the *Drake* as a significant intimation to those ashore of the fate of that cruiser. Heading northward the *Ranger* passed through North Channel, skirted the western coast of Ireland and made for France, where she arrived with her prize on the 8th of May, when Captain Jones had First Lieutenant Simpson of the *Ranger* arrested for disobedience of orders. The daring and success of this short cruise

[1] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 262.

[2] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 44.

of twenty-eight days are unsurpassed in the annals of naval history. The name Paul Jones became a synonym of terror throughout the coasts of Great Britain, and he was the object of hatred and malicious misrepresentation.

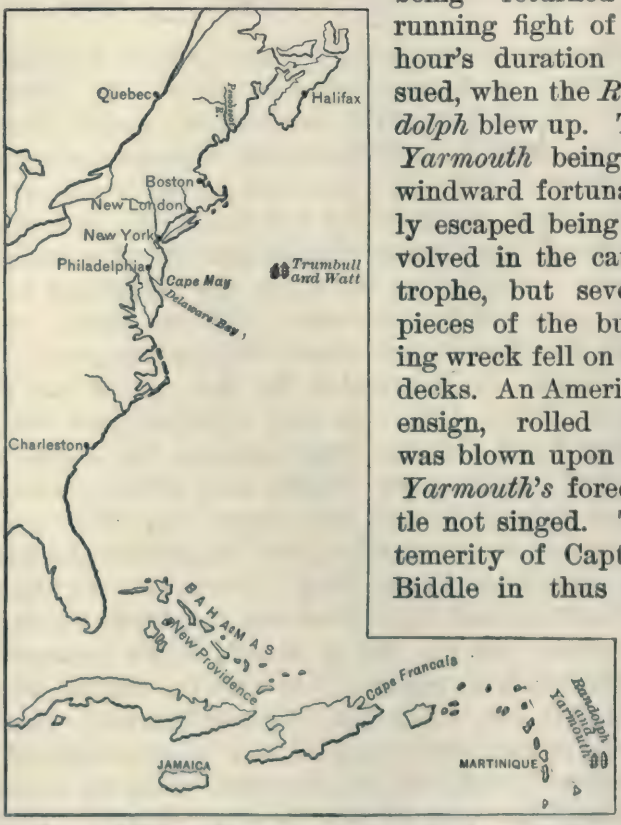
CHAPTER V.

THE STRUGGLE IN AMERICAN WATERS.

THE first of the 32-gun frigates, ordered by Congress in 1775, to get to sea was the *Randolph*. In February, 1777, this ship, under the command of Captain Nicholas Biddle, sailed from Philadelphia with general cruising orders, but when only a few days out she was overtaken by a violent gale in which her masts were so seriously weakened that Captain Biddle put into Charleston for repairs. Getting to sea again the *Randolph* in one week returned to Charleston with six prizes, one of them, the *True Briton*, armed with twenty guns. Here the frigate was blockaded for the rest of the year, but in March, 1778, this ship together with the following South Carolina State cruisers, the 18-gun ship *General Moultrie*, the 16-gun ship *Notre Dame*, the 16-gun ship *Polly* and the 14-gun ship *Fair American*, got to sea in search of the English 32-gun frigate *Carrysford*, the 20-gun sloop *Perseus*, the 16-gun sloop *Hichinbrook* and a privateer that had been cruising off the coast. On the 7th of March, while eastward of Barbadoes, these vessels fell in with the English 64-gun ship of the line *Yarmouth*, Captain Vincent. Captain Biddle immediately signaled the other vessels of his squadron to make all sail in escape while he stood on to engage the ship of the line single-handed. Unfortunately we must rely upon English accounts for the details of this affair.

Allen in his Battles of the British Navy says: "On the 7th of March, at 5 A. M., the 64-gun ship *Yarmouth*, Captain Nicholas Vincent, cruising eastward of Bar-

badoes got sight of a squadron of six sails consisting of two ships, three brigs and a schooner. The *Yarmouth* made sail to close on the strangers and at 9 A. M. was near enough to hail the largest, which proved to be the American 32-gun frigate *Randolph*, Captain Nicholas Biddle. The *Randolph* immediately hoisted her colors and fired a broadside at the *Yarmouth*, which being returned a running fight of an hour's duration ensued, when the *Randolph* blew up. The *Yarmouth* being to windward fortunately escaped being involved in the catastrophe, but several pieces of the burning wreck fell on her decks. An American ensign, rolled up, was blown upon the *Yarmouth's* forecastle not singed. The temerity of Captain Biddle in thus engaging a ship so much superior to his own deserved a better fate." In a foot-note the same writer adds: "On the 12th the *Yarmouth* fell in with a piece of wreck of the *Randolph* on which were found four



Scene of the naval operations of 1777, 1778 and 1779.



The Randolph and the Yarmouth.

men, part of the crew of the ill-starred ship. The poor fellows had been on the wreck four days and had subsisted on the rain water which had been imbibed by a piece of blanket which they had picked up. With these exceptions all hands perished." Captain Biddle was wounded early in the action, but refused to be carried below, and at the time the explosion occurred he was on deck having his wounds dressed. Thus out of a crew of three hundred and fifteen, three hundred and eleven perished. By this heroic sacrifice Captain Biddle so injured and harassed the *Yarmouth* that the other vessels of his squadron, although pursued, were enabled to make good their escape. Captain Vincent reported five killed and twelve wounded. A model of the *Randolph* was exhibited in 1842 in the hall of the Naval Asylum at Philadelphia.

In March, 1777, Captain Joseph Olney while cruising off the coast of Nova Scotia in the 14-gun brig *Cabot* discovered a suspicious sail to windward, and after edging near enough to ascertain that the stranger was of superior force he made sail to escape. But the brig proved to be a dull sailer and the stranger gained rapidly. Seeing that capture was inevitable Captain Olney headed for land and ran his ship aground. By this time the enemy had gained so much that the Americans barely had time to get ashore and escape to the woods. The *Cabot* with her armament and stores fell into the hands of the English, who succeeded in floating her off and took her into their service. The British vessel was the 28-gun frigate *Milford*. Captain Olney subsequently seized a schooner and arrived safely in port. This loss was retrieved shortly afterward by the *Trumbull*, Captain Dudley Saltonstall, which frigate on the 9th of April, while lying off New York, chased two British transports, and after a spirited action captured them and found that they were laden with military stores for the British army. The enemy

suffered heavily in this affair, while the *Trumbull* had seven killed and eight wounded.

During 1777, David Bushnell, of Saybrook, Connecticut, completed a submarine boat called the *American Turtle*, which is the first of this species of naval warfare in the records of the American navy. In a letter to Thomas Jefferson he describes the machine as follows: "The external shape of the submarine vessel bore some resemblance to two upper tortoise shells of equal size joined together, the flue of entrance into the vessel being represented by the opening made by the swells of the shells at the head of the animal. The inside was capable of containing the operator and air sufficient to support him thirty minutes without receiving a fresh supply. At the bottom, opposite to the entrance, was fixed a quantity of lead for ballast. At one edge, which was directly before the operator, who sat upright, was an oar for rowing forward or backward. At the other edge was a rudder for steering. An aperture at the bottom, with its valve, was designed to admit water for the purpose of descending, and two brass forcing pumps served to eject the water within when necessary for ascending. At the top there was likewise an oar for ascending or descending, or continuing at any particular depth. A water-gauge or barometer determined the depth of descent, a compass directed the course, and a ventilator within supplied the vessel with fresh air when on the surface. The skillful operator could swim so low on the surface of the water as to approach very near a ship in the night without fear of being discovered, and might, if he chose, approach the stern or stem above water with very little danger. He could sink very quickly, keep at any necessary depth and row a great distance in any direction he desired without coming to the surface. In the fore part of the brim of the crown of the submarine vessel was a socket and an iron tube passing through the socket; the tube stood upright and could slide up

and down in the socket six inches. At the top of the tube was a wood screw fixed by means of a rod which passed through the tube and screwed the wood screw fast upon the top of the tube. By pushing the wood screw up against the bottom of a ship and turning it at the same time it would enter the planks. Behind the submarine vessel was a place above the rudder for carrying a large powder magazine. This was made of two pieces of oak timber large enough, when hollowed out, to contain a hundred and fifty pounds of powder with the apparatus used in firing it, and was secured in its place by a screw turned by the operator. A strong piece of rope extended from the magazine to the wood screw above mentioned and was fastened to both. When the wood screw was fixed and ready to be cast off from its tube the magazine was to be cut off likewise by severing it, leaving it hanging to the wood screw. Within the magazine was an apparatus constructed to run any length of time under twelve hours; when it had run its time it unpinned a strong lock, resembling a gun lock, which gave fire to the powder."

Mr. Bushnell seems to have had more success with his machine than would be thought possible from the above description. The following letter from Captain J. Symons, of the British frigate *Cerberus*, dated August, 1777, to Rear-Admiral Parker, shows that Bushnell's submarine boat at least made British commanders far more cautious and disinclined to come too near inshore.

"Wednesday night, being at anchor to the west of New London in Black Point Bay, the schooner I had taken was at anchor close by me astern. About eleven o'clock at night we discovered a line towing astern that came from the bows. We immediately conjectured that it was somebody that had veered himself away by it and began to haul in. We then found that the schooner had got hold of it (who had taken it for a fishing line), gathered in near fifteen fathom, which was

buoyed up by little bits of sticks at stated distances until he came to the end, at which was fastened a machine which was too heavy for one man to haul up, being upward of one hundredweight. The other people of the boat turning out assisted him, got it on deck, and were unfortunately examining it too curiously when it went off like the sound of a gun, blew the boat into pieces and set her in a flame, killing three of the men that were in her stern; the fourth, who was standing forward, was blown into the water."

The following closing sentences of this letter show that the commander of the *Cerberus* was made very ill at ease by this first experience with submarine warfare: "Upon examining round the ship after this accident we found the other part of a line to the larboard [port] side buoyed up in the same manner, which I ordered to be cut away immediately for fear of hauling up another machine. . . . The mode these villains must have taken, etc. . . . As the ingenuity of these people is singular in their secret modes of mischief, etc." Captain Symons, like many naval officers of a later day, evidently did not approve of "under-handed" fighting. In January, 1778, Mr. Bushnell sent a "Fleet of Kegs" down the Delaware with a view of having them explode among the British ships that were in the lower part of the river, but owing to the ice and darkness they did little damage. They blew up one of the enemy's boats, however, and occasioned no little consternation among their seamen. Francis Hopkinson based his humorous poem "The Battle of the Kegs" on this incident.

In May, 1777, the 32-gun frigate *Hancock*, Captain John Manly, and the 24-gun ship *Boston*, Captain Hector McNiel, got under way for a cruise eastward, the *Hancock* being the second of the new cruisers to get to sea. Early on the morning of the fourth day out from Boston the *Hancock*, being about four miles to windward of her consort, signaled a strange sail, and Captain Manly put about and stood for the stran-

ger, which soon was made out to be an English frigate. After some manœuvring to determine the force and sailing qualities of his foe, Captain Manly closed on him and opened the action with a broadside from his starboard battery. It was not long before the enemy, finding himself opposed to a superior force, turned to escape; but the *Hancock* was quickly in pursuit, and as she was one of the swiftest vessels in the service she soon closed again on the enemy. The chase kept up a galling fire on the *Hancock's* rigging, but Captain Manly, reserving his ammunition until fairly alongside, poured in a full broadside, and then began another heavy cannonade, which the enemy with commendable obstinacy sustained for an hour, when, the *Boston* having come within range, he struck. The prize proved to be the British 28-gun frigate *Fox*, Captain Fotheringham. The *Hancock* sustained a loss of eight men killed or wounded, while that of the *Fox* was placed at thirty-two.

A prize crew having been put aboard the *Fox*, the vessels continued their cruise to the north. While approaching too near the harbor of Halifax, June 1st, they were pursued by the British 44-gun frigate *Rainbow*, Sir George Collier, the 32-gun frigate *Flora* and the 18-gun sloop of war *Victor*. The *Boston* was well to seaward and found no difficulty in effecting her escape, but the *Hancock* and the *Fox* were so close inshore that the enemy was upon them before sail could be made. As soon as the force of the strangers was discovered the *Hancock* and the *Fox* crowded on all sail to escape, but they were so hard pressed that Captain Manly began easing his ship by throwing overboard every article that could be dispensed with. This so increased the *Hancock's* speed that she undoubtedly would have got free had not the wind failed at a critical moment, leaving her within easy gunshot of the *Rainbow* and the *Victor* with no means of changing her position. Seeing that it was impossible to elude

the enemy's cruisers, Captain Manly struck his flag. The *Flora* in the meantime had overtaken and captured the *Fox*, but not without a sturdy resistance on the part of her prize crew.

The conduct of Captain McNiel, of the *Boston*, in deserting his consort at the first alarm has been harshly criticised. This neglect of duty, if it was such, was owing largely, if not entirely, to the unorganized condition of the navy at that period. The absence of *esprit de corps* was one of the many disadvantages under which our officers contended. That moral courage and keen sense of official honor which lead men to prefer death to professional disgrace were necessarily wanting in the undisciplined body of men who so bravely manned our ships during the Revolution. It was hardly just, therefore, to criticise these officers as if they were a properly organized body of men, or to expect them at once to attain the same degree of discipline to which long experience and practice had brought the English service. It is not probable that the *Boston* could have been of any avail against the superior force that attacked the *Hancock*, but had she gone to the assistance of the *Fox* there is some reason to believe she might have prevented her recapture. Even this, however, is open to question, for the vessels were at the entrance of the principal English naval station in North America, and had the *Boston* become involved in an engagement the enemy could have sent out such forces as would have made her escape impossible. The country denounced Captain McNiel in unmeasured terms, and Congress, obeying the dictates of popular clamor, dismissed him from the service.

On the 14th of June, 1777, Congress resolved "that the flag of the thirteen United States shall be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." The design of this flag, the thirteen stripes representing the original thirteen colonies, and

a star for each State of the Union, remains to this day, which makes the American flag, or "Old Glory" as it has frequently been called, one of the oldest among the great banners of the world. On the 1st of May, 1795, the number of stripes was increased to fifteen, so as to match the number of stars. This was done on the admission of Vermont and Kentucky into the Union, and from 1795 to 1818 the American flag had fifteen stripes. In 1818 the number of stripes was reduced to the original thirteen. The design of the present flag of Great Britain was adopted in 1801, that of Spain in 1785, that of France (the tricolor, also red, white and blue) in 1794, that of Portugal in 1830, that of the German Empire in 1871, and that of Italy in 1848. So the American flag may well be called "The Old Flag."

The year 1778 opened auspiciously for the cause of the colonists on the high seas. Early in January Captain John P. Rathbourne, in the 12-gun ship *Providence*, sailed for a cruise to the south. Appearing off the Bahamas, he learned that the port of New Providence was poorly garrisoned, and, landing at eleven o'clock at night on the 27th of January with twenty-five men, at a short distance from the town, where he was joined by about thirty American prisoners who had escaped from British prison ships at that place, he marched upon the town, seized the forts, and overawed the inhabitants with threats of burning their houses. The guns of the forts were then turned on an English privateer of sixteen guns lying in the harbor, and her flag was lowered at the first summons; the six remaining vessels in port also surrendered. Late in the afternoon the British sloop of war *Grayton* entered the Roads, but being fired at hastily withdrew. On the following day the populace assembled in such numbers as to place the handful of Americans in a critical position; and as no advantage was to be derived by holding the town, Captain Rathbourne ordered the guns to be spiked, and, having secured the small arms, ammu-

nition and stores, returned to his ship without the loss of a man. Two of the prizes were burned, while the others sailed with the *Providence* for the United States.

It will be remembered that Captain Thomas Thompson in 1777 was relieved of the command of the 32-gun frigate *Raleigh* for having deserted the *Alfred* when attacked by the *Ariadne* and the *Ceres*. The *Raleigh* was then placed under the orders of Captain John Barry, who was the commander of the *Lexington* in her fight with the *Edward*. While in charge of the 28-gun ship *Effingham*, which was blockaded in the Delaware, this officer, with twenty-seven men in four boats, captured and destroyed a 10-gun schooner and four transports laden with freight for the British army, that were anchored off Port Penn. On the 25th of September, 1778, the *Raleigh* sailed from Boston having under convoy two merchant ships. The vessels got under way early in the morning, and at noon they discovered two sails to the south, when Captain Barry signaled the merchantmen to haul close by the wind while he ran down to reconnoiter. At dusk, when the strangers had been made out to be English frigates, the convoy was ordered to put back to port and the *Raleigh* cleared for action. But as night came on the Englishmen were lost to view, and Captain Barry resumed his course. The following day dawned with a heavy mist on the ocean, so that little could be seen. Toward noon the fog lifted and disclosed the enemy still to the south, holding a course parallel to that which the *Raleigh* had been making. Captain Barry then changed his course and crowded on every stitch of canvas, but as the afternoon wore on the fog settled down, again shutting the enemy out of sight. Taking advantage of this the *Raleigh* headed eastward under a press of sail for the rest of the afternoon and the following night.

As day began to break, September 27th, sail was

shortened and the ship was stripped of everything that might attract the enemy's attention. Captain Barry anxiously swept the horizon with his glass, and as his pursuers were nowhere to be seen he filled away to the southeast; but at 9.30 A. M. the enemy again hove in sight, whereupon Captain Barry went about and stood on the wind north by west. On this point of sailing the *Raleigh* proved her superiority, and soon dropped her pursuers out of sight. By noon, however, the wind fell so that the enemy's leading ship again appeared above the horizon, and this vessel gained so rapidly that at 4 P. M. Captain Barry tacked to the west so as to ascertain her force. Soon afterward several low islands were discovered ahead, and as this rendered an engagement unavoidable the *Raleigh* luffed up to await the attack. It was nearly dark when the foremost ship came within gunshot. She opened at long range, but rapidly closing ran under the *Raleigh's* lee quarter, where she kept up a heavy fire. At the second broadside the stranger gained an advantage in manœuvring by the loss of the *Raleigh's* fore-topmast and mizzen-topgallant mast, and he availed himself of it by endeavoring to rake, but Captain Barry frustrated this by bearing up so as to bring the ships side by side. The near approach of the enemy's second ship rendered further resistance out of the question, so the *Raleigh* wore around and headed for the islands already mentioned. The enemy promptly made sail in chase, but about midnight hauled off on account of shoaling water.

Finding that they had abandoned the pursuit, Captain Barry changed his intention of running his ship aground, as the night still afforded him an opportunity to escape, and, bending new sails, he tacked, but the enemy anticipated this movement and again closed upon him. The only recourse now left was to run ashore, so heading his ship toward the island he ran her fast aground. The Englishmen cautiously followed,

and taking positions off her quarter opened a heavy fire, to which the *Raleigh* replied with her stern guns, and at the same time hurried preparations were made for landing the crew and destroying the ship. A part of the men were put ashore, and the boats were returning for the remainder when the ship surrendered.

The English frigates proved to be the 50-gun ship *Experiment*, Captain Wallace, and the 28-gun ship *Unicorn*, the latter being the one that had engaged the *Raleigh*. The American loss was ten killed or wounded, while that of the *Unicorn* was ten killed besides many wounded. The *Raleigh* afterward was floated off and taken into the British service. Captain Barry and the men who escaped with him landed on an island known as the Wooden Ball, about twenty miles from the mouth of the Penobscot, and after undergoing great hardships they reached the mainland and finally gained the settlements.

By the close of the year 1778 the Americans had lost many of their cruisers, and as Congress was unable to replace them the navy had been reduced to fourteen vessels of war mounting three hundred and thirty-two guns.[1] In the year 1778 England had in commission one hundred and eighty ships of war, aggregating six thousand nine hundred and twenty-six guns. Of this force, eighty-nine ships, with a total of two thousand

[1] The following is the list: The 32-gun ship *Alliance*, the 32-gun ship *Confederacy*, the 32-gun ship *Hague* (or *Deane*), the 32-gun ship *Warren*, the 28-gun ship *Providence*, the 28-gun ship *Queen of France*, the 28-gun ship *Trumbull*, the 24-gun ship *Boston*, the 20-gun ship *Duc de Luzun*, the 18-gun ship *General Greene*, the 18-gun ship *Ranger*, the 18-gun ship *Saratoga*, the 12-gun brig *Providence* and the 10-gun cutter *Revenge*. From this it will be seen that, of the fourteen vessels purchased and fitted out as cruisers in 1775, only one, the 12-gun brig *Providence*, was still in the service. Of the thirteen frigates ordered under the law of December 13, 1775, and built in 1776, only four remained, while of the three cutters purchased by the American commissioners in France, only the *Revenge* was retained in service.

five hundred and seventy-six guns, were stationed on the North American coast.

Comparative Forces in 1778.

American:	14	vessels of war with a total of	332	guns.
British:	89	" "	2,576	"

In January, 1779, the 32-gun frigate *Alliance* was ordered to France for the purpose of conveying General Lafayette home, and, as a compliment to the marquis, the command of the ship was given to Captain Pierre Landais, a French officer of reputed skill and merit. The *Alliance* was one of the new frigates ordered by Congress to replace those destroyed when the enemy occupied Philadelphia, and was so named in honor of the treaty which had been concluded with France. It was found extremely difficult to fill out her complement, not only on account of the scarcity of seamen then beginning to be felt throughout the United States but because of the prejudice among the men against serving under a foreign officer. To overcome the difficulty, the authorities of Massachusetts resorted to impressment, but the magnanimous Lafayette protested against this measure as being contrary to the principles for which they were struggling. The authorities then had recourse to a still more objectionable method of raising the required number. Having in custody some English seamen from the ship of the line *Somerset*, which had been wrecked on the New England coast the year before, the State government offered them their liberty if they would serve in the *Alliance* on her passage to France. The offer was readily accepted, and these men, with some French sailors and a few American volunteers, made up the complement, and with this ill-assorted crew the *Alliance* sailed from Boston on the 11th of January, 1779.

It was with an unusual degree of anxiety that the friends of General Lafayette bade him adieu when he sailed in the care of such a crew, nor were their appre-

hensions alleviated by the knowledge that Parliament had passed a bill encouraging sailors in American ships to rise on their officers, a munificent bounty being promised in case they succeeded in bringing the vessel into an English port. It seems that the men of the *Alliance* were aware of this inducement to mutiny, and the frigate had not been out many days when a conspiracy was begun among the seventy or eighty British seamen, who constituted a portion of the crew, and by the third week out a well-laid plot had been developed. The signal "Sail ho!" from the masthead was to be given about daylight on the morning of February 2d, upon which the mutineers were to form in four divisions: one to clear the quarter-deck and kill any officer that might appear, another to secure the magazine, a third to capture the ward room, and the fourth to seize the cabin. The four long 9-pounders on the forecastle were secretly loaded with grape and canister, and trained so as to sweep the after decks. All the officers, the surgeon, the carpenter and the gunners were to be killed, while the lieutenants were to have the option of navigating the ship to the nearest English port or of "walking the plank." The passengers were to be given up as prisoners on arrival in England.

At the date settled on for the perpetration of this deed the *Alliance* would be about two days from land; but on the night of February 1st the conspirators decided to postpone the execution of their plot until four o'clock in the afternoon of the following day, so as to induce one of the seamen, who had unusual knowledge of navigation, to co-operate with them. This was in anticipation of the lieutenants refusing to navigate the ship or playing them false by running her into a French port. Supposing the man in question to be an Irishman, they broached the subject to him, but he was an American who had resided on the Emerald Isle several years and had acquired the brogue. Feigning to favor their scheme, he obtained the details of the

plot and then awaited an opportunity to disclose it to the officers. It wanted but an hour of the appointed time when he, with much difficulty, managed to speak to the officer of the deck unobserved. To him he disclosed the danger, and also named the men who would be found faithful and would follow him to any rallying-point. A few minutes before four o'clock the officers and passengers, armed with cutlasses and firearms, rushed on deck, where they were joined by the French and American sailors; and the mutineers, finding themselves discovered, pleaded for clemency. At this moment an English 24-gun ship hove in sight, but was allowed to escape after a little manœuvring, as the condition of the crew made it inadvisable to give battle. Thirty or forty of the mutineers were put in irons, and on their arrival in Brest were placed in prison to await trial, but they were afterward exchanged, as Lafayette was adverse to any further punishment being inflicted.

On the 18th of April, 1779, a squadron under Captain John Burroughs Hopkins (son of Esek Hopkins) sailed from Boston. It consisted of the 32-gun frigate *Warren*, flagship; the 28-gun frigate *Queen of France*, Captain Joseph Olney; and Captain John Paul Jones' celebrated 18-gun ship-sloop *Ranger*, now commanded by Captain Simpson. The *Queen of France* was built in France, and was secured for our navy by the efforts of Dr. Franklin and Silas Deane. On the 6th of April this squadron sighted and after a long chase captured a British privateer of fourteen guns, and from her people Captain Hopkins learned that a fleet of armed transports and storeships had sailed a few days before from New York, laden with supplies for the British troops in Georgia and South Carolina. The squadron immediately filled away, hoping to come up with the vessels before they reached their destination. Late in the afternoon of the 7th nine sails were made out off the starboard bow. The three cruisers immediately cleared for action and rapidly bore down, and after some sharp

manœuvring seven of the transports — for such the strangers proved to be—were captured, the other two escaping in the night. The vessels taken were the 20-gun ship *Jason*, with one hundred and fifty men; the 16-gun letter of marque *Maria*, with eighty-four men; the 8-gun privateer *Hibernia*, with forty-five men; three brigs and a schooner laden with supplies for the British army. Among the prisoners were Colonel Campbell and twenty English army officers on the way to join their regiments. Of such importance was this capture that Captain Hopkins immediately returned to Boston with his prizes.

Early in May the *Queen of France*, commanded by Captain John P. Rathbourne, and the *Ranger*, again got to sea, this time accompanied by the 28-gun frigate *Providence*, Captain Abraham Whipple—who was engaged in the boat attack on the British revenue schooner *Gaspé* in June, 1772. In July these cruisers fell in with a large fleet of merchantmen, escorted by a 74-gun ship of the line and several frigates. By skillful manœuvring the American cruisers succeeded in cutting out eleven valuable prizes, three of which were recaptured before reaching port, but the remaining eight arrived safely in Boston. Their cargoes were valued at over a million dollars, so that from a pecuniary point of view this was the most successful cruise of the war.

It is very much to be regretted that the records of an action between the United States 12-gun brig *Providence* and the English brig *Diligent* have been lost. The forces engaged were small, but from the meager fragments that have been preserved it seems that this engagement called forth an obstinate resistance and persevering heroism that have seldom been surpassed. The brigs were evenly armed, the *Providence* commanded by Captain Hoysted Hacker, and the *Diligent* by Captain Thomas Davy (?). On the 7th of May, 1779, they met, and after an hour's bloody fighting the *Dili-*

gent struck, having lost eight men killed and nineteen wounded, a total of twenty-seven out of a crew of fifty-three! The *Providence* lost four killed and ten wounded. The *Diligent* was brought into port and was taken into the service.

In the spring of 1779 the Massachusetts State cruiser *Hazard*, commanded by John Foster Williams, had a severe action with the English 18-gun privateer *Active;* the *Hazard* mounting fourteen guns. After a hot engagement of nearly an hour the *Active* struck, being badly cut up, and, on boarding, Mr. Williams found that she had sustained a loss of thirty-three killed or wounded, while the *Hazard* reported a loss of eight. For his gallantry on this occasion the command of the 18-gun State cruiser *Protector* was given to Mr. Williams; Edward Preble, afterward captain, serving in the ship at this time. On the 9th of July, 1780, Captain Williams attacked a heavy privateer called the *Admiral Duff*, and after a sanguinary action of an hour the privateer was blown up. Fifty-five of her men were saved, the *Protector* losing six killed or wounded. Shortly after this the *Protector* was chased by the British 32-gun frigate *Thames*, but escaped by superior seamanship.

For the purpose of establishing a secure and convenient naval station nearer to the seat of war the enemy erected a fort near the mouth of the Penobscot, and as this proved a source of irritation to Massachusetts that State determined to dislodge the English at her own expense. Accordingly, fifteen hundred militia, under the command of General Solomon Lovell, were embarked in thirteen privateers and transports. This fleet was accompanied by the following Continental cruisers: The 32-gun frigate *Warren*, Captain Dudley Saltonstall; the 14-gun brig *Diligent*, Captain Brown; and the 12-gun brig *Providence*, Captain Hoysted Hacker; the entire marine force being commanded by Captain Saltonstall, of the *Warren*. The expedi-

tion appeared off the Penobscot on the 25th of July, 1779, and after landing the troops the fleet opened a heavy fire on the fort, but finding its armament inadequate it soon drew off to await re-enforcements. In the meantime the news of the intended attack reached New York, and on the 13th of August Sir George Collier appeared with the 64-gun ship of the line *Raisonnable*, the 32-gun frigate *Greyhound*, the 32-gun frigate *Blonde*, the 32-gun frigate *Virginia*, the 20-gun sloop *Galatea*, the 20-gun sloop *Camilla* and the 14-gun brig *Otter*. The 18-gun sloop *Nautilus*, the 14-gun brig *Albany* and the 14-gun brig *North* were at the Penobscot before the arrival of Sir George.

At the first alarm the American privateers scattered in all directions, each vessel seeking its own safety regardless of signals from the *Warren*. The three Continental cruisers, with some of the privateers and transports, were compelled to run up the river, where they were destroyed to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy; the crews and militia, after enduring great hardships, reached the settlements. By this disaster the United States lost three of its few remaining war vessels, and privateering also received a heavy blow.

On the 2d of August, 1779, the 32-gun frigate *Deane* (or *Hague*), Captain Samuel Nicholson, and the 24-gun frigate *Boston*, Captain Samuel Tucker, made a short cruise in company, during which they secured six prizes aggregating fifty-four guns. Among the vessels taken were the 16-gun packet *Sandwich*, the 20-gun privateer *Glencairn* and the 18-gun privateer *Thorn*. Captain Tucker, who commanded the *Boston* on this occasion, was one of the most successful officers in the service. While in charge of a small schooner in 1776 he captured, after a desperate action of two hours and a half, a British transport laden with military stores. While commanding the State cruisers *Hancock* and *Franklin* he secured about thirty English vessels. For

these services he was appointed to the command of the 24-gun frigate *Boston*, on the 15th of March, 1777, and in February, 1778, he took John Adams to France. Returning to the United States in June, 1779, he secured five prizes, and then convoyed a fleet of merchantmen, laden with clothing bought in Holland for the American army, from the West Indies to Philadelphia. Soon after this he sailed on a cruise in the *Confederacy*. After his cruise in the *Deane*, in August, 1779, he sailed in the *Boston* in the same year, to join the squadron under Captain Abraham Whipple to assist in the defense of Charleston. On the surrender of that place he was made a prisoner, but was exchanged for Captain Wardlaw, whom he had captured in the *Thorn*. Returning to Boston in 1780, he sailed in the *Thorn* and captured seven vessels; but in July, 1781, the *Thorn* was captured by the British cruiser *Hind*, and he was again made prisoner.

Thus far English commerce had suffered unprecedented losses at the hands of American cruisers and privateers. On the 6th of February, 1778, Mr. Woodbridge testified at the bar of the House of Lords that "the number of ships lost by capture or destroyed by American privateers since the commencement of the war is seven hundred and thirty-three, of which, after deducting for those retaken and restored, there remained five hundred and fifty-nine, the value of which, including the ships, cargoes, etc., amounted, upon a very moderate calculation, to £1,800,633 18*s*. . . . The alderman further stated that the average value of a ship and cargo trading to Jamaica was £8,000 on her outward and £10,000 on her homeward voyage. . . . That insurance before the war was two per cent to America, and two and a half per cent to North Carolina, Jamaica, etc. That insurance to America, Africa and the West Indies was now more than double, even with the convoy, and without the convoy, unless the ship was a ship of force, fifteen per cent. William

Creighton, Esq., not only corroborated the alderman in the most material points, but added many new facts which had fallen within his own knowledge. He stated the losses suffered by the merchants in consequence of the captures made by the American privateers to have amounted to at least £2,000,000 in October last, and that by this time they could not be less than £2,200,000."[1]

[1] Records of Parliament, vol. xix, pp. 707–711.

CHAPTER VI.

SECOND CRUISE OF CAPTAIN JOHN PAUL JONES.

On returning to Brest after his successful cruise in the *Ranger*, May 8, 1778, Captain John Paul Jones endeavored to secure a better and larger ship with which to operate off the coasts of England. He wrote to Dr. Franklin, June 1, 1778: "The *Ranger* is crank, sails slow, and is of trifling force. Most of the enemy's cruisers are more than a match." After many months of vexatious delay he received the following letter from the French Minister of the Marine:

"Versailles, *February 4, 1779.*

"*To* John Paul Jones, *Esq., Commander of the American Navy in Europe.*

"Sir: I announce to you that his Majesty has thought proper to place under your command the ship *Duras*, of forty guns, at present at L'Orient. I am about, in consequence, to issue the necessary orders for the complete armament of said ship. The commission which was given you at your departure from America will authorize you to hoist the flag of the United States, and you will likewise serve yourself with powers which have been remitted to you to form your equipage with American subjects; but as you may find too much difficulty in raising a sufficient number, the King permits you to levy volunteers until you have a sufficient number, exclusive of those who are necessary to manœuvre the ship.

"[Signed] De Sartine.

"P.S.—According to your desire, sir, I consent that the *Duras* takes the name of the *Bonhomme Richard.*"

The following extract from Sherburne's Life of Captain Jones explains the reason for changing the name of the *Duc de Duras:* "It is a fact not generally known that the late John Paul Jones, at the time that he was attempting to fit out a small squadron during the late war in one of the ports of France, to cruise on the coast of England, was much delayed by neglects and disappointments from the court that nearly frustrated his plans. Chance one day threw into his hands an old almanac containing Poor Richard's Maxims, by Dr. Franklin. In that curious assemblage of useful information a man is advised, 'if he wishes to have business faithfully and expeditiously performed, to go on it himself; otherwise, send.' Jones was immediately struck, upon reading this maxim, with the impropriety of his conduct in sending letters and messages to court when he ought to have gone in person. He instantly set out, and by dint of personal representation procured the immediate equipment of the squadron which afterward spread terror along the eastern coast of England. In gratitude to Dr. Franklin he named the principal ship of his squadron the name of the pretended almanac-maker, *le Bonhomme Richard.*"

The *Duc de Duras*, or the *Bonhomme Richard*, as she is known in American history, proved to be an antiquated India merchant ship, and had one of the high old-fashioned poops that caused the sterns of the ships launched in the early part of the eighteenth century to resemble towers. On being fitted for the India trade she carried her armament as a single-deck ship, with the usual forecastle and quarter-deck guns. As she had unusually high sides, Captain Jones caused twelve ports, six on a side, to be cut in the lower gun

room. Here six old 18-pounders were mounted, which in smooth water could be used to advantage, but in rough weather the ports were necessarily closed. On her main deck the *Bonhomme Richard* was pierced for twenty-eight guns, which was the usual armament of the old English 38-gun frigate. For these ports Captain Jones ordered 18-pounders, but as they could not be procured in time he substituted 12-pounders. On the quarter-deck and forecastle eight 9-pounders were mounted, giving in all forty-two guns.[1] The following extract from a letter from General Lafayette to Captain Jones will give an inkling as to the quality of the *Bonhomme Richard's* armament: "I think you are extremely right in refusing such guns as would expose your reputation, the lives of your men, and even the honor of your flag."

On the arrival in France of the 32-gun frigate *Alliance*, Captain Pierre Landais, as narrated in the last chapter, she was placed under the orders of Captain Jones. A third vessel, the *Pallas*, Captain Denis Nicholas Cottineau, also a merchantman, was purchased, armed with thirty guns,[2] and fitted out for the expedition. A merchant brig called the *Vengeance*, Captain Ricot, also was purchased and armed, while the fifth vessel of the squadron was the 18-gun cutter *Cerf*.[3] The *Cerf* and the *Alliance* were the only vessels in the squadron built for war purposes.

When, after strenuous efforts, these vessels were secured, the still more difficult task of manning them remained. We have already seen that it was only by great exertions that a crew for the *Alliance*, even in an American port, was finally enlisted, owing to the great scarcity of seamen then beginning to be felt throughout the United States. The mutiny which broke out in that frigate soon after sailing showed the kind of men with which commanders at that period of the war had

[1] Official report of Captain Jones. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

to deal. From these circumstances we get some idea of the difficulties Captain Jones had in securing seamen for his squadron in a foreign port. But Captain Jones was indefatigable, and, after surmounting the most formidable obstacles, he brought together a barely sufficient number of men. Undesirable and inefficient as the crew of the *Alliance* had proved to be, the complements which finally were secured for the vessels of this squadron were much worse. Of all the motley and incongruous gatherings that have assembled in a vessel of war, perhaps the crew of the *Bonhomme Richard* was the most remarkable in point of variety. Her muster roll showed that the men hailed from America, France, Italy, Ireland, Germany, Scotland, Sweden, Switzerland, England, Spain, India, Norway, Portugal, Fayal and Malaisia, while there were seven Maltese, and the knight of the ship's galley was from Africa. Among the officers, however, the American element predominated.

The first design of this expedition was an attack on Liverpool.[1] General Lafayette, with six hundred and fifty dragoons and soldiers, was to embark in the ships, sail directly for the Mersey, and, after having laid that great shipping port either in ashes or under ransom, put back to France before the alarm could be given. Before these arrangements could be completed Lafayette was ordered to take command of the King's regiments, which necessitated the abandonment of the land attack, but Captain Jones still determined on a cruise around the coast of Great Britain.

On the 19th of June, 1779, this remarkable squadron sailed from L'Orient. Taking a course to the south, it convoyed several merchantmen into the Loire and the Garonne to Bordeaux. The defects of the organization immediately came to the surface, and disputes arose even as to who was the commander of the expedition.

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[1] General Lafayette to Captain Jones.

Captain Landais, whose eccentricities had prevented his employment in the French navy, claimed seniority by virtue of his commission, stoutly maintaining that his had been issued directly from the American Congress, and that of Captain Jones had come only from Dr. Franklin. As to the matter of dates, the commission of Captain Jones —which, as we have seen, was issued directly from the American Congress — antedated that of Landais by nineteen months. The Committee on Foreign Affairs informed the American commissioners in France that Captain Jones "takes with him his commission to France."[1] Dr. Franklin, moreover, duly authorized by Congress, had appointed Captain Jones as the commander of this squadron.[2] The absurdity of the claims of Captain Landais is but one of the many evidences that we shall have of his mental derangement.



The second cruise of Captain Jones in British waters.

"PHILADELPHIA, *9th May, 1777.*

"GENTLEMEN: This letter is intended to be delivered to you by John Paul Jones, an active and brave commander in our navy. Our design of sending him is (with the approbation of Congress) that you may purchase one of those fine frigates that Mr. Deane

[1] Sparks' Diplomatic Correspondence, vol. i, p. 290.

[2] Dr. Franklin to Captain Jones, April 28, 1779.

writes us you can get, and invest him with the command thereof as soon as possible.

"[Signed] ROBERT MORRIS,
RICHARD HENRY LEE,
WILLIAM WHIPPLE,
PHILIP LIVINGSTON,
Committee on Foreign Affairs."

Lack of seamanship and ordinary discipline also became apparent at the outset. On the night of their departure the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Alliance*, by palpable mismanagement, aggravated no doubt by a Babel of tongues, fouled and narrowly escaped serious disaster. As it was, the *Bonhomme Richard* lost her head and cutwater, sprit-sail yard and jib-boom, while the *Alliance's* mizzenmast was carried away. The collision made a return to port necessary, and this, together with a tedious investigation into the causes of the accident, made another vexatious delay, so that it was nearly two months, or the 14th of August, before the squadron again got under way.

While returning to L'Orient for repairs the squadron came in sight of three British cruisers that were coming down as if to engage, but, getting close enough to make out the height of the *Bonhomme Richard's* sides, they probably took her for a two-decker and made their escape under press of sail. This occurred on the 22d of June, and on the 29th of June, while the American flagship was alone off the Penmarks, two of the enemy's cruisers bore down on her, but these also put about to escape, probably mistaking the *Bonhomme Richard* for a two-decker. In the meantime the *Cerf* had given chase to an English war vessel of fourteen guns. A warm action ensued, and after a brave resistance the Englishman struck. But a superior force appeared at this moment, and Captain Varage was compelled to abandon his prize. He then returned to port for repairs. Several men were killed or wounded in the *Cerf*.

While the squadron was thus detained at L'Orient, one hundred and nineteen exchanged American prisoners arrived in a cartel at Nantes, and on hearing of the proposed expedition most of them enlisted and were taken aboard the *Bonhomme Richard*. This was an invaluable re-enforcement, and in a great measure it was instrumental in bringing about better discipline and organization in the crew. Soon afterward Captain Jones received another acquisition to his squadron in the person of Richard Dale. This officer had been master's mate in the *Lexington*, and after making his escape from Mill Prison, as narrated in Chapter IV, he learned of the force fitting out under Captain Jones, and hastening to L'Orient offered his services. He was made first lieutenant in the *Bonhomme Richard*, the second lieutenant being Henry Lunt.

While the *Bonhomme Richard* was undergoing repairs at L'Orient Captain Jones wrote to Dr. Franklin: "I have inspected the *Bonhomme Richard*, and it is the constructor's opinion that she is too old to admit of the necessary alterations. Thus circumstanced, I wish to have an opportunity of attempting an essential service to render myself worthy of a better and faster-sailing ship."

On the 14th of August, 1779, the squadron again sailed, this time accompanied by the French privateers *Monsieur* and *Granville*. Captain Jones wrote to De Sartine, the Minister of Marine, that the *Bonhomme Richard's* complement numbered three hundred and eighty officers, men and boys, inclusive of "one hundred and thirty-seven marine soldiers." On the 18th a large ship belonging to Holland, in the hands of a British prize crew, was captured. During the night the commander of the *Monsieur* appropriated such articles from the prize as he wished, and then put her in charge of one of his officers with instructions to make for port. Captain Jones resented this infringement on his authority, and promptly reversed the Frenchman's

orders and sent the prize into L'Orient. Taking offense at this, the commanders of both the *Monsieur* and the *Granville*, on the evening of the following day, separated from the squadron and did not again join it. The *Monsieur* subsequently was captured by the enemy.

On the 21st, a brigantine from Limerick for London was seized and sent into L'Orient, and on the 23d the squadron made Cape Clear. In the evening, while the Americans were chasing another brigantine in the vicinity of some dangerous rocks called the Shallocks, the wind failed and it became necessary to send the boats ahead of the *Bonhomme Richard* to tow. Seizing a favorable moment, the men in the barge, who were Englishmen, cut the line and made a dash for the shore. The sailing master, Cutting Lunt, hastily manned another boat and with four armed soldiers started in pursuit. After they had pulled a long distance from the ship a heavy fog settled on the water, completely shutting out of view any object more than a boat's length away. This, together with the oncoming night, not only enabled the deserters to make good their escape, but prevented the pursuing boat from rejoining the ship, by which mishap Captain Jones lost a valuable officer and twenty-three men. The deserters landed the next morning at Ballinskellix, County Kerry, and gave notice of the presence of the American squadron. Two days later Sailing-Master Lunt reached the same place with his men and was sent to Mill Prison. In a year or two he was liberated, but soon afterward he was lost at sea. He was a distant relative of Henry Lunt, the *Bonhomme Richard's* second lieutenant, both of them being natives of New Hampshire.

On the following afternoon, August 24th, Captain Landais came aboard the flagship and exhibited so much insubordination that Captain Jones more than ever doubted the soundness of his mind. He wrote to Dr. Franklin: "In the afternoon Captain Landais came aboard the *Bonhomme Richard* and behaved toward

me with great disrespect, affirming in the most insolent manner and language that I had lost my boats and people through my imprudence in sending boats to take a prize! He persisted in his reproaches, though he was assured by Messrs. De Weibert and De Chamillard that the barge was towing the ship at the time of the elopement, and that she had not been sent in pursuit of the prize. He was affronted because I would not, the day before, suffer him to chase without my orders, and to approach the dangerous rocks [the Shallocks] where he was an entire stranger and where there was not sufficient wind to govern a ship. He told me that he was the only American in the squadron, and was determined to follow his own opinion in chasing when and where he thought proper, and in every other matter that concerned the service, and that if I continued in that situation three days longer the squadron would be taken."

As a heavy gale came up on the morning of the 26th, Captain Jones gave the signal to sail northward. On the following day only the captured brigantine and the *Vengeance* could be seen from the flagship. Skirting along the western coast of Ireland and Scotland in a leisurely manner, these vessels on the 31st made the Flannen Islands. The next day, September 1st, while they were chasing a vessel to windward, two large ships appeared in the northwest. These proved to be the *Alliance* and a prize from Liverpool for Quebec. Upon ascertaining this, Captain Jones resumed his pursuit of the sail to windward. The swift-sailing *Alliance* also joined in the pursuit and by noon had the stranger under her guns. She proved to be a letter of marque from London for Quebec, laden with naval stores for an armament on the Great Lakes. Such was the terror inspired by American cruisers and privateers that this ship, like many others, had made the circuit to the north of Scotland rather than take the direct course from London to the New World, which was vigilantly watched by American ships.

Captain Jones then weathered Cape Wrath and made for the first rendezvous, hoping to fall in with the *Pallas* and the *Cerf*. On the 2d of September chase was given to a large sail which proved to be the *Pallas*, Captain Cottineau reporting that his ship's steering gear had become disabled during the gale of August 26th. The next day the squadron doubled Fair Isle and stood for the second rendezvous with the expectation of meeting the *Cerf*, which cutter had not been seen since the 23d of August. But the *Cerf* again failed to appear.

On the 4th of September a pilot from Shetland boarded the *Bonhomme Richard* and gave Captain Jones such information as to induce him to call a council of his captains to decide on their future movements. The signal to repair to the flagship was obeyed by all the commanders with the exception of Captain Landais. To him Captain Jones issued several orders, and finding them unnoticed he sent a written command. This called forth a disrespectful response from that erratic Frenchman, upon which the council proceeded without him. It was now decided to make for the third and last rendezvous, and if they did not find the *Cerf* there to continue the cruise without her. As that cutter again failed to appear, Captain Jones stood down the eastern coast of Scotland.

Land was not seen again until late in the afternoon of the 13th, when the Cheviot hills were descried. During all this time the *Alliance* assumed the most independent course, paying no attention to signals from the flagship, and on the 8th disappeared altogether to the east. This left the *Bonhomme Richard* with only the *Pallas* and the *Vengeance*.

Learning that a British sloop of war of twenty guns was at anchor in the Firth of Forth, Captain Jones resolved to capture her, and at the same time secure a large contribution from the people under threat of laying the city of Leith in ashes. While working up

to windward of the Firth of Forth for this purpose, the cruisers had come almost within reach of the town when a heavy gale carried them out to sea. The wind blew with such violence that a prize, taken on the 14th, foundered, and it was with the greatest difficulty that her people were rescued. Before the attempt on Leith could be renewed the country had been thoroughly alarmed, and troops from Edinburgh, only a mile distant, were hurried down to defend the place.

Captain Cottineau, of the *Pallas*, and Captain Ricot, of the *Vengeance*, now began to give indications of insubordination, both urging the necessity of leaving the English coast, as the country was aroused and many war ships had been sent to intercept them. Captain Cottineau finally intimated that, if the order to leave these waters was not given by the 21st or the 22d, both he and Captain Ricot would abandon the *Bonhomme Richard* to her fate. On the 19th the *Vengeance* disappeared to the south in pursuit of several vessels, and soon afterward the *Pallas* followed with all the prizes, leaving the flagship quite alone. Skirting along the Northumberland coast the *Bonhomme Richard*, on the 20th, again fell in with the *Pallas* and the *Vengeance*, and Captain Cottineau reported that he had sunk one of the vessels chased the day before and had ransomed the others; which was in disobedience of strict orders.

On the 21st, while the squadron was off Flamborough Head, two sails were discovered and chased, the *Pallas* making after that to the northeast, while the *Bonhomme Richard*, followed by the *Vengeance*, went in pursuit of the one in the southwest. The latter, a brigantine collier from Scarborough, was soon overtaken and sunk. Toward evening several sails appeared to the south. Giving chase, Captain Jones drove one of the vessels ashore between Flamborough and Spurn Head, and soon afterward another brigantine was taken. By daylight of the 22d the *Pallas* was nowhere to be seen.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BONHOMME RICHARD AND THE SERAPIS.

The *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Vengeance* were now off the mouth of the Humber. Here two pilots were decoyed aboard, from whom Captain Jones learned that the entire coast was in the wildest state of excitement; that the force of the American squadron had been exaggerated to ridiculous proportions; and that the people were burying their plate and other valuables. Sir Walter Scott said that he "well remembered the feeling excited by the appearance of Jones' squadron." So ignorant were the English of the true character of the American ships that a member of Parliament sent a boat aboard the *Bonhomme Richard* with a request for powder and shot, saying that he had heard that "Paul Jones was on the coast, and he wished to be ready for him." Captain Jones sent a barrel of powder, but informed the honorable gentleman that he did not have shot of the desired size. By this time the squadron had nearly completed the circuit of Great Britain, and had taken about seventeen vessels, many of which were destroyed, but the more valuable cargoes had been sent into port in charge of prize crews. These drafts of seamen had seriously weakened the crews, and that of the *Bonhomme Richard* numbered now only three hundred and twenty men. In view of these facts and the danger of remaining too long in one place, Captain Jones headed northward, so as to double Flamborough Head, at which place the *Pallas* was last seen. During the night two sails were chased, which on the following

morning proved to be the *Pallas* and the *Alliance*, the latter having been absent for two weeks.

About noon of this day, September 23d, while the American squadron, in chase of a brigantine, was nearing Flamborough Head from the south, a large sail, promptly followed by several others, suddenly rounded that promontory from the north. This apparition was immediately followed by other ships, which came into view one after the other in quick succession. The Americans counted the strangers with increasing amazement and consternation, and in twenty minutes they found themselves in the presence of a fleet of forty-two ships.

The excitement occasioned in the American squadron by the unannounced appearance of this formidable force was intense, for, should the vessels prove to be ships of war, or should the convoy be much superior to the American cruisers, the chances for escape were slight indeed. More than this, it was well known to Captain Jones and his men that should they fall into the hands of the English they could expect little clemency, for the exasperation aroused in Great Britain by the enormous amount of injury inflicted on British commerce by American vessels, and especially by Captain Jones, together with the brutality with which the British ministry was accustomed to treat American colonists, left no room for doubt as to the fate that awaited them in the case of capture. That the ministers were particularly anxious to vent their wrath on Captain Jones is evident from the tenor of a memorial presented by Sir Joseph Yorke, British ambassador to Holland, a few weeks afterward, to the Staats-General. In this document Sir Joseph demanded "that those ships and their crews might be stopped and delivered up which the pirate Jones, a rebel subject and criminal of the state, had taken." Well might Mr. Burke exclaim against carrying on this war "in a manner contrary to the usage of civilized nations." On

the other hand, should these vessels prove to be merchantmen under a weak escort, the Americans had a rare opportunity for dealing a crushing blow at the enemy's commerce.

Thus hesitating between fear and exultation, the little squadron anxiously allowed the fleet to draw near, ready at a moment's notice to spread all sail for escape or to pounce upon the prey. The pilot boat, which had been manned by sixteen men under Second-Lieutenant Henry Lunt, and was at this time in chase of the brigantine, was recalled, but she had already gone so far that Captain Jones was under the necessity of abandoning her.[1] This left the *Bonhomme Richard* with only one lieutenant, Richard Dale (the third lieutenant, Cutting Lunt, having been lost on the 23d of the preceding month), or three hundred and four men in all.

After a long and careful search through the glass, Captain Jones was satisfied that there were only two vessels of war in the fleet, upon which he gave the signal for a general chase. Just then a boat, which had been observed hurriedly pulling from the shore toward the hostile fleet, was seen to run alongside of the larger English frigate, and a man clambered up her side by means of a rope ladder and gained the deck. This was the bailiff of Scarborough, giving notice to the British commander of the presence of Paul Jones. Soon afterward three little black balls were seen ascending the English frigate's mast, which on reaching the masthead fluttered out into signal flags, and at the same time a gun was fired to windward. This was the signal of an enemy, and the merchantmen hastily put about and in great confusion scattered in all directions, many of them firing alarm guns and seeking refuge under the guns of Scarborough Castle, while the frigate with her consort bore down to cover the flight.

[1] Affidavit of Second-Lieutenant Lunt.

At this critical moment the insubordination which had been so noticeable throughout the cruise, especially on the part of Captain Landais, became alarming, for not only did that officer willfully ignore the signal to fall astern of the *Bonhomme Richard*, but Captain Cottineau also seemed to be affected by the example of his brother officer. Instead of obeying the signal, Captain Landais drew ahead to speak to the *Pallas*, and, as was afterward proved, said, "If it is a ship of more than fifty guns, we have nothing to do but to run away."[1] As Captain Jones was thus delayed by the dastardly conduct of his subordinates, it was nearly dark before he could approach the enemy. By this time, however, the *Pallas* had changed her demeanor, and gallantly advanced to engage the enemy's second ship, while the *Bonhomme Richard* singled out the frigate. But the *Alliance* held aloof in mutinous indifference to the impending battle. As soon as the British commander found that his convoy was out of danger he tacked inshore; and Captain Jones, fearing that the Englishman might seek refuge under the guns of the castle, changed his course so as to cut the enemy off from the land. This manœuvre gave rise to a serious misapprehension on the part of the other American commanders. They knew that the *Bonhomme Richard* had several hundred English prisoners in her hold, and when she suddenly headed inshore they believed that the prisoners, with the aid of the English sailors comprising a considerable portion of the crew, had risen on their captors, killed Captain Jones, and were running the ship into Scarborough. Acting under this impression, Captain Cottineau tacked and laid the head of the *Pallas* offshore.

By 6.30 P. M. it was so dark that Captain Jones had some difficulty in following the movements of his antagonist even with the aid of a powerful glass. The

[1] Affidavit of Captain Cottineau, of the *Pallas*.

fast-falling night rendered the bold headland of Flamborough indistinct, and the other vessels of the squadron were quickly lost to view. The British frigate at this moment was heading westward, while the *Bonhomme Richard* was coming down with the wind on her port quarter. As the Americans drew near, the outlines of the enemy's ship stood out in dark relief in the gathering gloom, and as the huge vessels edged toward each other to grapple in a deadly struggle a profound hush settled over the scene. The fretful splashes of the waves as the great frigates disdainfully tossed them aside, and the subdued seething of the foaming waters rushing swiftly along their sides, alone served to break the quiet of the hour. When the ships were within pistol shot of each other a voice from the stranger hailed, "What ship is that?" to which Captain Jones replied, "I can't hear what you say," wishing to close before opening fire. Finding that the hail was ineffectual, the voice was again heard across the water: "What ship is that? Answer, or I shall be under the necessity of firing into you." Again no reply came from the ghostly ship, the hail seemingly having been lost in the deep silence.

But now a few orders were quietly passed along the American batteries. Suddenly, as if at a preconcerted signal, two blinding sheets of flame leaped from the dark sides of both the frigates into the black night, while the discharge of forty guns crashed into the deathlike stillness, and round shot, grape and canister rushed to their mission of destruction and death. For an instant all was again quiet, as each man instinctively looked around to ascertain which of his companions had fallen or how his ship had fared by this first blow of the battle. Then began the heat of the action, the men hastening to reload the guns while the agonized groans of the wounded roused the hot blood of revenge. At the first broadside two of the six 18-pounders in the improvised battery of the lower gun

deck of the *Bonhomme Richard* burst, killing most of the men that worked them, and blowing up the deck

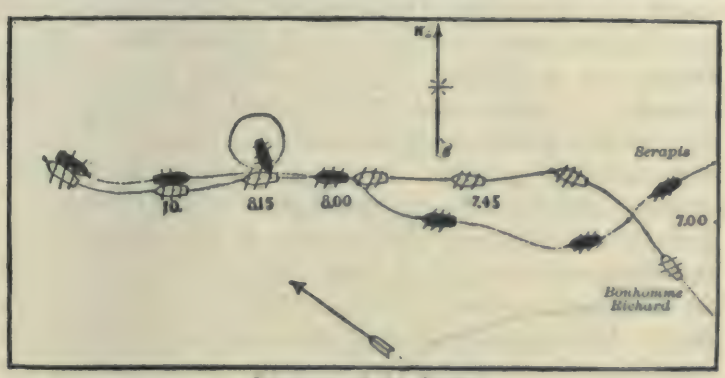


Diagram of the Battle.

above. The remaining 18-pounders were necessarily abandoned, as after the warning given by the first two the men refused to handle the rest. By this disaster the *Bonhomme Richard* was not only deprived of her heaviest battery, but also sustained a serious loss in killed or wounded.

Captain Jones now drew ahead and crossed the enemy's bow to leeward, while the latter filled away, coming up on his port quarter. The frigates then verged nearer to each other until they were within half pistol shot. By this time the cannonading had become furious, enveloping the two vessels in a dense volume of smoke, which was illuminated by continuous flashes. Soon the musketry in the tops mingled its sharp rattling fire with the roar of the artillery, and the shrieks and yells of the wounded and dying increased with the din of battle until the two ships coming together united their tumults in one awful uproar. The slaughter in the *Bonhomme Richard* had become frightful. Her decks were literally flooded with blood, while sluggish crimson streams oozed out from her scuppers, and running down her sides streaked the black hull with a ghastly hue.

Thirty minutes after the battle opened the *Bonhomme Richard* had received several 18-pound shot under the water line, which caused her to leak seriously. By the loss of his battery of 18-pounders Captain Jones was compelled to rely entirely upon his 12-pounders. These guns were manned and fired chiefly by American and French seamen, who worked them with desperate energy. In three quarters of an hour, however, this battery of fourteen guns was completely disabled or silenced, while seven of the quarter-deck and forecastle guns had been dismounted. This left the frigate with only two 9-pounders on the quarter-deck. With great difficulty a 9-pounder was shifted over from the starboard side, thus giving her in all three 9-pounders. These guns were loaded under the personal supervision of Captain Jones, and swept the enemy's deck with great effect. They were then double-shotted with round shot and aimed at the main-mast.

After the battle had lasted an hour the moon rose. The enemy now forged ahead with the intention of running across the *Bonhomme Richard's* course to rake; but, seeing that he had miscalculated his distance, he, after giving a yaw, put his helm a-lee, which brought the frigates in line ahead. The *Bonhomme Richard*, having greater momentum, overtook the enemy and ran her bowsprit over his stern. There was now a lull in the uproar, as each side expected the other to board, and after a moment's uncertainty the British commander hailed to know if the American ship had struck. Captain Jones replied, "I have not yet begun to fight!" He then backed his topsails, and the enemy filling away the frigates separated.

The Englishman then shivered his after-sails, put his helm hard down, and laying all aback forward wore short around on his heel, with the intention of raking, but owing to the smoke and confusion he ran his jib boom afoul of the *Bonhomme Richard's* starboard

mizzen shrouds. Seeing that his only chance was at close quarters, Captain Jones with his own hands lashed the spar to his rigging. The ships hung in this position for a moment, but the wind gradually swung them around side by side, and brought a leverage on the enemy's bowsprit, which soon snapped under the strain. At the same moment his spare anchor hooked on the *Bonhomme Richard's* quarter and held the vessels together. The Americans then secured the ships by passing a hawser over the stump of the enemy's bowsprit and around the *Bonhomme Richard's* mizzenmast. In this position, side by side, bow and stern, the two frigates fought for the remainder of the action. With the view of separating them the English commander dropped his anchor, hoping that the wind would carry the American clear of him, but the *Bonhomme Richard* hung fast, and thenceforth they remained anchored.

While the vessels were thus swinging alongside the British closed their lower ports on the engaged side, fearing that the Americans might board through them; but now, as the frigates lay closely pressed against each other, these ports, which opened outwardly, could not be raised. This compelled the enemy either to abandon their battery of 18-pounders or fire through their own ports to reach the American ship. They resorted to the latter alternative.

The battle now recommenced with great fury. So close were the ships that the gunners in loading were obliged to send their rammers into the ports of the opposite vessel, and the *Bonhomme Richard* was soon set on fire in several places with burning wads. To meet this new enemy Captain Jones detailed a portion of his crew, and the flames were extinguished before they made serious headway. Between nine and ten o'clock the enemy attempted to board, but, finding the *Bonhomme Richard's* men drawn up in readiness to receive them, they abandoned the attempt.

As we have already seen, the American lower battery of 18-pounders at the first discharge had proved worse than useless, so that all this time the English gunners, in their corresponding battery of 18-pounders, were unmolested, and were pouring in broadside after broadside with impunity. As a consequence, the lower portion of the *Bonhomme Richard's* hull was in a terrible condition. The six ports had been battered into one awful chasm, through which the waves washed freely, while shot frequently passed through the ship and fell into the sea on the other side without touching her. To offset this appalling condition the Americans had put all their forces on the upper decks and in the rigging. The fire from their tops had driven every officer and seaman out of sight, while the 9-pounders on the quarter-deck and one or two 12-pounders, which had been brought into play again, gradually silenced the upper batteries in the British frigate.

Seeing that the enemy's upper decks were deserted, an American seaman climbed out on the *Bonhomme Richard's* main yard with a bucket filled with combustibles and hand grenades, which he threw on the decks of the English frigate whenever he saw two or three men collected. As the enemy retreated below decks this seaman began tossing his grenades into the hatches, where they occasioned considerable injury. Finally, reaching far out on the yard and taking deliberate aim, he managed to drop a grenade through the main hatchway and into the gun room below. Here the enemy's powder boys had been depositing 12-pound cartridges, and as the guns of this battery had been gradually silenced, the supply of ammunition was greater than the demand. In the confusion of the battle this supply was not checked, so that in a short time a quantity of ammunition was hurriedly piled along the deck until a great mass had accumulated. The blazing grenade fell on this heap, and the explosion was terrific. The fire, "running from cartridge

to cartridge all the way aft, blew up the whole of the people and officers that were quartered abaft the mainmast."[1] "More than twenty of the enemy were blown to pieces, and many stood with only the collars of their shirts upon their bodies."[2] The British commander, a week after the action, reported that thirty-eight were killed or wounded by this explosion.

At this juncture the *Alliance* hove in sight. Captain Jones then believed that the battle was decided, but to the consternation of all she fired a full broadside into the *Bonhomme Richard's* stern. Captain Jones in his official report says: "I now thought that the battle was about ended. But to my utter astonishment he, Pierre Landais, discharged a full broadside into the stern of the *Bonhomme Richard*. We called to him for God's sake to forbear, yet he passed along the off side of the ship—which was the port side, the enemy being on the starboard side—and continued firing. There was no possibility of his mistaking the enemy's ship for the *Bonhomme Richard*, there being the most essential difference in their appearance and construction. Besides, there was a full moonlight, and the sides of the *Bonhomme Richard* were all black, and the sides of the enemy's ship were yellow. Yet, for the greater security, I showed the signals for our reconnoissance by putting out three lanterns, one at the bow, one at the stern and one in the middle, in a horizontal line. Every tongue cried out that he was firing into the wrong ship, but nothing availed. He passed round firing into the *Bonhomme Richard*, head, stern and broadside, and by one of his volleys killed several of my best men and mortally wounded a good officer of the forecastle. My situation was truly deplorable. The *Bonhomme Richard* received several shot under the water [line] from the

[1] Official report of the British commander.

[2] Journal of Lieutenant Dale.

Alliance. The leaks gained on the pumps, and the fire increased much in both ships." A number of men had collected on the *Bonhomme Richard's* forecastle, where the enemy's shot could not reach them, but the *Alliance*, in coming around the flagship's bow, poured in a destructive fire of grape, which killed or wounded ten or twelve of these men, among the killed being Midshipman Caswell, who affirmed with his dying breath that he had been slain by a shot from the American frigate. There could be no doubt that the *Alliance* had been captured by the enemy, and now, with a British crew aboard, was attacking the *Bonhomme Richard.* The cry, "The *Alliance* has been captured by the British and is now attacking us!"[1] was heard all over the ship. But as the *Alliance* soon ceased her fire and stood away from the frigates, Captain Jones did not strike.

But the mischief had been done. Already there were several feet of water in the hold, which the leakage caused by the broadside from the *Alliance* so increased that now the water rapidly gained on the pumps. Besides this the fire, which for some time had been raging below, now approached within a few feet of the magazine. This state of affairs so alarmed the master-at-arms that he cried out, "The ship is sinking!" and took it upon himself to liberate between one and two hundred prisoners who were confined below decks, and the carpenter at the same time reported six feet of water in the hold. The panic that ensued was appalling. The men rushed wildly about in confusion, their blind haste frustrating their own efforts to lower the boats; the liberated prisoners ran about the ship with but little thought, fortunately, except for their own safety; the wounded piteously entreated to be removed from the sinking ship, but were ruthlessly trampled under foot by the frantic,

[1] Affidavit of Midshipman John Mayrant, of the *Bonhomme Richard.*

struggling mass of men ; orders were shouted in many languages, only to be lost in the tumult. Several of the warrant officers, after looking in vain for Captain Jones and Lieutenant Dale, the latter being below at the moment examining the pumps, decided that it was their duty to surrender the ship, and went to the quarter-deck to haul down the colors. The flag, however, had been shot away, upon which the gunner ran to the taffrail and called out to the English ship for quarter. Hearing this, the British commander actually mustered a boarding party to take possession of the *Bonhomme Richard*, but the men, being exposed to the musketry from the American tops, were soon driven below again.

Among the English prisoners was the master of a letter of marque, captured a few days before off the coast of Scotland. Taking advantage of the stampede, he slipped through one of the ports and stepped aboard the enemy's ship, where he informed her commander of the confusion in the American frigate. This gave new life to the Englishmen, and giving three cheers they loaded their guns with renewed energy. The condition of the *Bonhomme Richard* was hopeless indeed. She had taken in so much water as to be perceptibly settling, a fire was raging near her magazine which the efforts of her crew had not been able to check, nearly all her guns were disabled, several hundred prisoners were skulking about the ship ready at the first opportunity to strike from behind, and the enemy was thoroughly cognizant of these overwhelming disasters.

The surviving officers now advised Captain Jones to surrender, and any ordinary commander would have been justified in doing so. But Jones was not an ordinary commander. Defiantly returning the Englishman's inquiry if the Americans had surrendered with an emphatic negative, this strange man converted his disheartening calamities into the very means of success. Circulating the report that the English frig-

ate was on the point of sinking, Captain Jones convinced his prisoners that their lives, as well as those aboard the British ship, depended on the *Bonhomme Richard's* floating. Terrified at this, the Englishmen eagerly manned the pumps and fought the flames with frantic energy. This clever artifice had the double advantage of relieving the American crew from the arduous task of fighting the water and fire and also of safely disposing of the many prisoners. Captain Jones then ordered his men to their guns, threatening to kill the first man that hesitated to obey, and the sight of a cocked pistol and the expression on his face forced them to prompt obedience.

The stratagem succeeded admirably. Under the supervision of Lieutenant Dale the prisoners fought the flames and worked the pumps with desperate eagerness, stimulated every now and then by a remark from that officer to the effect that the enemy's ship was fast settling, until, utterly exhausted, they were relieved by other gangs of prisoners. Thus by the efforts of these Englishmen the *Bonhomme Richard* was kept afloat, for without their aid her fearfully weakened crew could not have mustered sufficient strength to check the inrushing water.

Finding that the cannonading from the American frigate rather increased than diminished, the enemy began to doubt if the British privateersman had informed them aright. Their own ship was on fire in several places, and the crew had suffered great losses. One by one their guns had become silent, while a few on the American frigate were still worked with effect. Feeling that further resistance was hopeless, the British commander at 10.30 P. M. with his own hands hauled down his flag. A moment later his mainmast tottered and went crashing over the side, bringing down with it the mizzen topmast. Captain Jones then ceased firing, and Lieutenant Dale was ordered to take possession. Jumping on the gunwale and seizing the

loose main brace, that officer swung himself on the enemy's deck. Standing on the lee side of the quarter-deck, he found the British commander, Captain Pearson, of the 44-gun frigate *Serapis*. Lieutenant Dale was promptly followed on board the British frigate by Midshipman Mayrant and a party of boarders. Mr. Mayrant was wounded in the thigh by a boarding pike in the hands of a seaman in the waist who was unaware of the surrender.

But the labors of the exhausted crews were not over yet, for the *Bonhomme Richard* was sinking and also in momentary danger of blowing up, and it was only by the united exertions of both crews that she was kept afloat during the night, while the wounded and prisoners were hurried aboard the *Serapis*. The *Bonhomme Richard's* hull was so shattered that, had it not been for the support of a few futtocks which the enemy's shot had missed, her poop, quarter-deck and main deck would have fallen into the gun room, so that the Americans in the after part of the ship actually had been fighting on a floating platform upheld by only a few stanchions, and these were not carried away simply because they were so close to the enemy that no gun could reach them. Captain Jones said her "rudder was cut entirely off the stern frame, and the transoms were almost cut away; the timbers by the lower deck especially, from the mainmast to the stern, being greatly decayed with age, were mangled beyond my power of description; and a person must have been an eyewitness to form a just idea of the tremendous scene of carnage, wreck and ruin that everywhere appeared. Humanity can not but recoil from the prospect of such finished horror, and lament that war should produce such fatal consequences." Immediately on the surrender of the *Serapis*, Captain Jones ordered the lashings to be cut and the two ships separated. Now that the *Bonhomme Richard* stood alone in the light of the moon, the chasms in her sides were

brought out more clearly. She presented such a horrible spectacle that many of her men, fearing that she would sink, threw themselves into the water and swam to the nearest ships, while ten Englishmen, who formed a part of her crew, seized a boat from the *Serapis* and escaped to the shore. About ten o'clock on the morning of the 25th the *Bonhomme Richard* rapidly settled, gave a heavy roll, and plunged out of sight, bow foremost, to the bottom of the German Ocean. The other ships of the squadron with the prizes, after repairing damages, sailed for Texel, where they arrived on the 3d of October.[1]

This action of three hours and a half duration—7 to 10.30 P. M.—is unsurpassed in naval history for the endurance displayed on both sides. The ships grappled from the first and immediately began a desperate struggle, which ceased only when their common enemies, fire and water, threatened to engulf them both. The *Bonhomme Richard*, as we have seen, was but a merchant vessel mounted with guns. Her armament consisted of six 18-pounders in the improvised battery on the lower gun deck, twenty-eight 12-pounders on her main deck, and eight 9-pounders on the quarter-deck and forecastle, making in all forty-two guns, throwing five hundred and sixteen French pounds of metal, which are equal to five hundred and fifty-seven English pounds. On the first discharge two of the six 18-pounders burst, and the others were abandoned as being too dangerous. Thus the *Bonhomme Richard* was deprived of her heaviest battery from the outset. This left her with only 12- and 9-pounders; in all thirty-six guns, throwing a total weight of four hun-

[1] The flag carried by the *Bonhomme Richard* in this cruise "was made of English bunting, and was about eight and one half yards long and one yard five inches wide. It was sewed with flax thread, and contained twelve white stars in a blue union and thirteen stripes, alternately red and white. The stars were arranged in four horizontal lines, three stars in each."—*Preble's History of the United States Flag*, p. 283.

dred and forty-one English pounds. But as she actually carried these 18-pounders, they will be counted in her armament.

The *Serapis* was a new frigate only a few months out. English historians rate her as a 44-gun ship,[1] but have neglected to give a detailed description of her armament. Her captors and all American authorities agree that she carried fifty guns, which is more than probable, since vessels generally carried more guns than their nominal rate. Her armament consisted of twenty 18-pounders on the lower gun deck, twenty 9-pounders on the main deck, and ten 6-pounders on the quarter-deck and forecastle—in all fifty guns, throwing six hundred pounds of metal. Captain Jones, besides being encumbered with several hundred prisoners, found that his crew had been reduced by the loss of his two barges, the pilot boat and the necessity of manning prizes, to three hundred and four, all told. Of this number forty-nine were killed and sixty-seven wounded,[2] among the latter being Lieutenant Richard Dale, who was severely wounded by a splinter, but so earnestly engaged in the battle that he did not discover the fact until after the surrender, when he attempted to rise from his seat on the binnacle and fell to the deck. The *Serapis* is admitted to have carried a crew of three hundred and twenty, all told.[3] Of this number Captain Pearson reported forty-nine killed and sixty-eight wounded.[4]

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	K'd.	W'd.	Total.	
Bonhomme Richard:	42	557	304	49	67	116	Time
Serapis:	50	600	320	49	68	117	3h. 30m.

The *Countess of Scarborough* was gallantly defended by Captain Piercy, and did not strike until

[1] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 251.

[2] Official report of Captain Jones.

[3] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 253.

[4] Official report of Captain Pearson.

after nearly two hours of resistance, during which she had "all her braces, the greater part of her running rigging, main and mizzen topsails and sheets shot away and seven guns dismounted."[1] She carried twenty-two 6-pounders and one hundred and fifty men, of whom four were killed and twenty were wounded.[2] Captain Cottineau and the Frenchmen under his command fought with commendable bravery.

The conduct of Captain Landais throughout the cruise, and especially during this action, was so extraordinary as to require indisputable proofs, which we have in the following testimony:

"We, the officers, etc., of the American squadron now at Texel, this 30th day of October, 1779, do attest and declare upon our words of honor as gentlemen that what [articles] we subscribe respecting the conduct of Peter Landais, captain of the frigate *Alliance*, are really and truly matters of fact. In witness thereof we hereunto sign our names and qualities, and will at any time hereafter be ready to prove the same upon oath if required." Then follow twenty-five separate instances in which Captain Landais is shown to have been guilty of culpable insubordination. Some of the more prominent, which bear directly on what has been narrated in reference to the engagement of the 23d of September, are these: "No. 9. On the morning of the 23d of September, when the *Bonhomme Richard*, after being off the Spurn, came in sight of the *Alliance* and the *Pallas*, off Flamborough Head, Captain Landais distinctly told Captain Cottineau (of the *Pallas*) that if it [the *Serapis*] was, as it appeared, a 50-gun ship, they must run away." Many officers of the *Pallas* corroborate this statement, and Captain Cottineau himself says: "With respect to Article 9, I recollect that he [Landais] said, 'If it is a ship of

[1] Official report of Captain Piercy. [2] *Ibid.*

more than fifty guns, we have nothing to do but to run away.'"

In reference to Captain Landais' firing into the *Bonhomme Richard*, Article 15 says: "At last Captain Landais made sail under his topsails to work up to windward, but made tacks before he (being within range of grapeshot, and, at the longest, three quarters of an hour, struck) fired a second broadside into the *Bonhomme Richard's* larboard [port] quarter, the latter part whereof was fired when the *Alliance* was not more than three points abaft the *Bonhomme Richard's* beam; although many tongues had cried from the *Bonhomme Richard* that Captain Landais was firing into the wrong ship, and prayed him to lay the enemy alongside. Three large signal lanterns with proper signal wax candles in them, and well lighted, had also, previously to his firing, been hung over the bow, quarter and waist of the *Bonhomme Richard* in a horizontal line, which was the signal of reconnoissance; and the ships, the one having a high poop and being all black, the other having a low stern with yellow sides, were easily distinguishable, it being full moon." This article is subscribed to by Lieutenant Dale, Lieutenant-Colonel Weibert, Lieutenant-Colonel Stack (French), Lieutenant-Colonel Macarty (French), Samuel Stacey the sailing master, and many others, all of the *Bonhomme Richard*. The charge is further substantiated by the officers of the *Alliance:* "Article 20. Several people on board the *Alliance* told Captain Landais at different times that he fired upon the wrong ship; others refused to fire." This article is signed by the first and second lieutenants, master and captain of the marines, all officers in the *Alliance* at the time. But there was a third witness of Captain Landais' treachery whom we have probably forgotten. When the English fleet rounded Flamborough Head, Second-Lieutenant Henry Lunt, of the *Bonhomme Richard*, with fifteen men, was in the pilot boat chasing the

brigantine, and he was unable to rejoin his ship until after the action. In the meantime he drew near the combatants, and saw a ship (afterward known to have been the *Alliance*) fire into the port side of the *Bonhomme Richard*, the *Serapis* being on her starboard side.

Thus we have the evidence of all the officers of the *Bonhomme Richard*, all of the *Alliance*, that of Second-Lieutenant Henry Lunt in the pilot boat, and the official report of Captain Jones, besides the affidavits of many eyewitnesses. From English reports we have still further proof: "Captain Pearson and his first lieutenant were instantly hurried on board the enemy's ship [the *Bonhomme Richard*], which was found to be in the most shattered condition; her stern and quarters were entirely beaten in."[1] On reviewing the manœuvres of the two frigates it will be seen that at no time could the *Serapis* possibly have fired into the *Bonhomme Richard's* stern, yet Allen says that her stern was "entirely beaten in," clearly showing that some ship other than the *Serapis* must have caused the damage.

English writers have endeavored to lead the public into the belief that the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Alliance* united in attacking the *Serapis*, but this assumption has no foundation. Captain Pearson merely declares that the *Serapis* received several shot from the *Alliance*, and this undoubtedly is correct, as the *Alliance* ran across the *Bonhomme Richard's* bow and raked; and as the *Serapis* was lashed alongside it would have been strange had not some of the shot struck the latter. But Captain Pearson in his official report in no way intimates that the *Alliance* ranged up on his off side, while article No. 18 shows that she did not: "Captain Landais never passed on the off side of the *Serapis*." This is subscribed to by the

[1] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 253.

first and second lieutenants and sailing master of the *Alliance*.

Neither can the presence of the *Alliance* be said to have exerted an influence on the battle any more against Captain Pearson than against Captain Jones, for the Americans, after making all the signals of recognition in vain, and repeatedly calling out that the *Alliance* was firing into the wrong ship, fully believed that she had been captured by her English prisoners, or by some English ship that had appeared on the scene of action after the battle began, and was now attacking them. This will be seen in the following: "I, late a midshipman on board of the *Bonhomme Richard*, and aid-de-camp to the Honorable John Paul Jones in the action of the 23d of September, off Flamborough Head, do certify that an hour after the commencement of it I was on the main deck, where there was a brisk firing kept up until a ship raked us, when I saw two men drop dead and several running from their quarters, crying out, 'The *Alliance* is manned with Englishmen and firing upon us.'"[1]

Captain Landais' motive for thus firing on his senior officer is seen in the following article: "No. 23. Captain Landais has acknowledged since the action that he would have thought it no harm if the *Bonhomme Richard* had struck, for it would have given him an opportunity to retake her and to take the *Serapis*." This article is subscribed to by Lieutenant-Colonel Weibert, Lieutenant-Colonel Stack (French), and Lieutenant-Colonel Macarty (French), while Midshipman Mayrant writes: "It is my sincere opinion on the conduct of the commander of said ship [the *Alliance*], together with his manœuvres during the time of action on the 23d of last September, that his motive must have been to kill Captain Jones, and distress the *Bonhomme Richard* so as to cause

[1] Affidavit of John Mayrant, October 24, 1779.

her to strike to the *Serapis* and honor himself with the laurels of that day. In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name, on board the *Serapis*, lying in Texel, the 24th of October, 1779. John Mayrant."

The proof comes from all quarters and from men of unquestioned honor. The conduct of Captain Landais aroused great indignation both in France and in America. But owing to the unorganized state of the American Government, and in view of the critical condition of the war, our commissioners did not carry the matter to its legitimate end, fearing it might give rise to ill feeling at a time when France had openly declared herself in favor of the United States. Captain Landais was discharged from the French navy and ordered to quit the country. When Congress learned of his behavior he was dismissed from the American service also, the belief that he was insane preventing a severer penalty.

Dr. Franklin, in spite of his extreme caution and desire to foster the friendly relations between the two peoples, could not refrain from expressing himself to Captain Landais, in a letter dated Passy, March 12, 1780, as follows: "No one has ever learned the opinion I have formed of your conduct. I kept it entirely to myself; I have not even hinted it in my letters to America, because I would not hazard giving to any one a bias to your prejudice. By communicating a part of that opinion privately to you I can do no harm, for you may burn it. I should not give you the pain of reading it if your demand did not make it necessary. I think you so impudent, so litigious and quarrelsome a man, even with your best friends, that peace and good order, and consequently the quiet and regular subordination so necessary to success, are, where you preside, impossible. These are within my observation and apprehension; your military operations I leave to more capable judges. If, therefore, I

had twenty ships of war at my disposition, I should not give one of them to Captain Landais. The same temper which excluded him from the French marine would weigh equally with me. Of course I shall not place him in the *Alliance.*"

On arrival in Texel the *Serapis* and the *Countess of Scarborough* were refitted and given to France, while Captain Jones assumed the command of the *Alliance.* Holland was not unfriendly to the Americans, but the aristocracy was opposed to the prolonged presence of American cruisers in these waters, and on the 27th of December, 1779, the *Alliance* was compelled to put to sea in the face of several hostile cruisers. A number of English war ships were waiting for Captain Jones, and not the least of his brilliant exploits was the manner in which he avoided them. The enemy did not believe that even the American commander would have the temerity to run the gantlet of the Straits of Dover, and consequently they were expecting the *Alliance* to pass around to the north of the British Islands. But again they misjudged their man. Closely hugging the shoals and keeping well to windward, Captain Jones evaded the blockading squadron off Texel, and instead of heading north he boldly stood down the English Channel in plain view of some of the largest British fleets. In passing Dover he went so close to the Downs as to accurately determine the force of the war ships there, and when he passed the Isle of Wight he was equally near the British fleet anchored at Spithead. Several of the heaviest English cruisers were eluded by keeping well to the east of them, and on the 10th of February, 1780, Captain Jones gained the Roads of Groix in safety. After a short cruise in the Bay of Biscay, the *Alliance*, in June, 1780, sailed for the United States.

Thus terminated one of the most extraordinary cruises in naval history. The inefficiency of the ships engaged, their deficient armaments, their promiscuous

and ill-assorted crews, the daring of their leader, the desperate energy displayed in the battle, together with the marvelous success of the enterprise, stand unsurpassed. England was astounded and filled with dread of the terrible Paul Jones, while her rage and humiliation at the total defeat of one of her best frigates by a man whom she persisted in calling "a pirate" passed all bounds. Captain Jones on returning to France was loaded with honors, and another squadron more worthy of his ability was promised.

No one knew better than Jones himself of the fate that awaited him if he fell into the hands of the English. Ordinary American navy officers cruised off the British coasts, knowing that, if captured, they would be subjected at the worst to cruel imprisonment; but to Jones, capture meant a most ignominious death. British opinion of Jones at that time is strikingly illustrated by an article published in an American newspaper of 1789 under the head "News from London": "The infamous son of Lord Selkirk's gardener did well in changing his name from John Paul to Paul John, or, as is now more generally accepted, Jones, being the more common surname and of similar sound. The gardener might possibly be an honest man, although the son was everything or anything but that. Like others in the line of iniquity, he began with inferior crimes, and proceeded in regular gradation to those of the greatest enormity. He plundered his master's, Lord Selkirk's, house, and he murdered multitudes of his innocent countrymen, besides numbers of his own sailors. Renegado-like, he joined the enemies of his king and country, among whom he was distinguished for his barbarity and violence. Polluted with crimes and stained with innocent blood, they detested and abhorred the traitor."

CHAPTER VIII.

CLOSING NAVAL ACTIONS OF THE REVOLUTION.

THE treatment that American seamen received in British prisons and prison ships during the War of the Revolution forms one of the dark pages of English history. Of the men employed in Continental cruisers only a comparatively small number were captured, but these were treated with great harshness, as the following extract from the British Annual Register for 1781 (page 152) will show:

"A petition was presented to the House of Commons the same day, June 20, 1781, by Mr. Fox, from the American prisoners in Mill Prison, Plymouth, setting forth that they were treated with less humanity than the French and Spaniards, though by reason that they had no agent established in this country for their protection they were entitled to expect a larger share of indulgence than others; they had not a sufficient allowance of bread and were very scantily furnished with clothing. A similar petition was presented to the House of Peers by the Duke of Richmond, and these petitions occasioned considerable debate in both houses. Several motions were grounded on these petitions, but those proposed by the lords and gentlemen in the opposition were determined in the negative, and others, to exculpate the Government in this business, were resolved in the affirmative. It appeared upon inquiry that the American prisoners were allowed half a pound of bread less per day than the French and Spanish prisoners. But the petitions of the Americans produced no alterations in their favor,

and the conduct of the administration was equally impolitic and illiberal. The additional allowance which was solicited on behalf of the prisoners could be no object either to the Government or to the nation; and it was certainly unwise, by treating American prisoners worse than those of France and Spain, to increase the fatal animosity which has unhappily taken place between the mother country and the colonies, and this, too, at a period when the subjugation of the latter had become so hopeless."

Such being the treatment of American prisoners in England, where they were under the eyes and within the knowledge of Parliament and the ministers, we can more readily understand that their fellow-sufferers in America were treated with even greater severity. The number of prisoners who perished in the prison ships anchored in Wallabout Bay, the site of the present Brooklyn Navy Yard, is variously estimated to have been between ten thousand and ten thousand five hundred. Of this number fully nine thousand were Americans, the others being Spaniards and Frenchmen who had been captured near the American coast.

The prison ships were old vessels of war which had been condemned as unseaworthy. They were the *Jersey*, the *Whitby*, the *Good Hope*, the *Falmouth*, the *Scheldt* and the *Clyde*, but the *Jersey* was the ship principally used for prisoners, the others being storeships and hospitals. There was no reason why the *Jersey* could not have been made a comfortable and healthful place of confinement for the great number of prisoners who were detained in her. She had been a ship of the line, and with a full supply of stores, provisions, and her heavy armament she was designed to carry a crew of four hundred men; and when she was stripped of her guns, stores and masts and reduced to a hulk, a thousand men might easily have been confined in her for many months without fear of disease. But the British officers, by their brutal indifference to



The prison ship Jersey.

1. Flagstaff, which was seldom used, and only for signals: 2. Canvas tent for the guards in warm weather: 3. Quarter-deck, with its barricade ten feet high, with a door and loopholes on each side: 4. Ship's officers' cabin, under the quarter deck: 5. Accommodation ladder, on the starboard side, for the use of the ship's officers: 6. The steerage, occupied by the sailors belonging to the ship: 7. The cookroom for the ship's crew and guards: 8. The sutler's room, where articles were sold to the prisoners and delivered to them through an opening in the bulkhead: 9. The upper deck and spar deck, where the prisoners were occasionally allowed to walk: 10. The gangway ladder, on the port side, for the prisoners: 11. The derrick, on the starboard side, for taking in water, etc.; 12. The galley, or great copper, under the forecastle, where the provisions were cooked for the prisoners: 13. The gunroom, occupied by those prisoners who were officers: 14 and 15. Hatchways leading below, where the prisoners were confined: 17 and 18. Between decks, where the prisoners were confined by night: 19. The bowsprit; 20. Chain cables by which the ship was moored.

the condition of the prisoners and by a shameful misappropriation of the funds, rendered the ships such breeding-places of pestilence that they were compelled to remove them from their anchorage near Manhattan Island to the malarious Wale Bogt, or Wallabout Bay, lest the contagion should spread to the town. The leakages in the *Jersey*, which were so great that a frequent use of her pumps was necessary to "prevent her from sinking," caused her to be constantly damp and her timbers to undergo a rapid decay.

One object in this treatment of American prisoners was to induce them to serve in a regiment of renegade colonists which was comfortably quartered on Long Island within sight of the prison ships, and the Americans had only to consent to serve against the colonies and they were immediately freed from the pest ships and allowed to go on shore. Be it said to the honor of these patriots that few accepted the offer, preferring to continue in their living death and have their bones strewed on the sands of the Wale Bogt rather than serve against their country. Among the prisoners confined in the *Jersey* were David and Samuel Porter, the former being the father of Captain David Porter, the commander of the *Essex* in her celebrated cruise in the Pacific Ocean in 1813 and 1814. Samuel Porter died in the *Jersey*, but his brother David Porter made his escape by concealing himself in a water cask that was carried ashore to be filled.

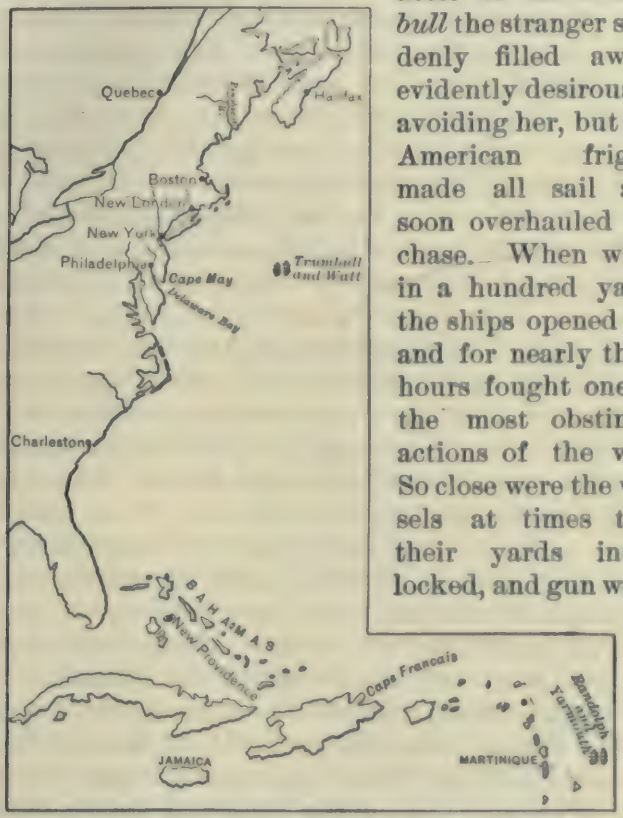
Many efforts were made to exchange these prisoners or alleviate their sufferings, but the rapacity and brutality of their keepers frustrated the one and prevented the other. Washington, in a letter to Congress dated February 18, 1782, wrote: "Few or none of these prisoners belonged to the regular cruisers of the colonies, most of them being captured privateersmen," and as the privateers seldom secured English prisoners there was no means of exchange. David Sproats, who had charge of the prison ships and boasted that he had caused the death

of more rebels than all the British armies in America, offered to exchange the prisoners for British soldiers, but the proposition was intentionally unfair and impossible, and, as Washington wrote, "it would immediately give the enemy a very considerable re-enforcement and will be a constant draft hereafter upon the prisoners of war in our hands; while the exchanged American prisoners, being captured while engaged in private enterprises, would return to their homes."

At the close of the year 1779 the navy had been reduced to a minimum. The vessels that won our admiration had become only memories, while their officers and crews were in British prisons or scattered far and wide seeking other fields of activity. By the fall of Charleston the 28-gun frigate *Providence*, the 28-gun frigate *Queen of France*, the 24-gun frigate *Boston* and the celebrated 18-gun ship-sloop *Ranger* were either captured or destroyed, which left the United States with only six vessels of war—the 32-gun ship *Alliance*, the 32-gun ship *Confederacy*, the 32-gun ship *Deane*, the 28-gun ship *Trumbull*, the 20-gun ship *Duc de Lauzun* and the 18-gun ship *Saratoga*. Not only had the vessels of the navy been reduced to this small number, but officers and seamen were scarce, as the English, finding that their commerce had suffered unprecedented losses at the hands of American cruisers and privateers, refused to exchange prisoners, hoping thereby to check this destruction of their trade. At the same time Parliament voted eighty-five thousand men for the navy during the year 1780. This increase, together with the departure of the French fleet under Count d'Estaing for the West Indies, made it exceedingly difficult for American vessels to get to sea.

Early in the summer of 1780 Captain James Nicholson, in the *Trumbull*, succeeded in running the blockade, and while he was cruising in latitude 35° 54′ north, longitude 66° west, June 2d, a sail was descried from the masthead. In hopes of decoying the stranger under

his guns, Captain Nicholson rigged his ship in a slovenly manner and carefully concealed all signs of hostility. After manœuvring so as to ascertain the character of the *Trumbull* the stranger suddenly filled away, evidently desirous of avoiding her, but the American frigate made all sail and soon overhauled the chase. When within a hundred yards the ships opened fire and for nearly three hours fought one of the most obstinate actions of the war. So close were the vessels at times that their yards interlocked, and gun wads



Scene of the naval operations of 1780, 1781 and 1782.

were frequently blown into the opposite ship, by which the *Trumbull* was twice set on fire. Finally the enemy's fire slackened, while that of the *Trumbull* was maintained with vigor, and victory seemed about to decide in favor of the American frigate when her mainmast tottered. Down it came with a crash, dragging spar after spar with it, until only the foremast was left; and the enemy, profiting by this disaster,

made his escape. He was afterward known to have been a heavily armed letter of marque called the *Watt*, commanded by a Mr. Coulthard, who admitted that his loss was ninety-two killed or wounded, while Captain Nicholson estimated her armament to be from thirty-four to thirty-six guns. The *Trumbull* with great difficulty regained port. Her loss was thirty-nine killed or wounded. The American crew was largely made up of raw hands, many of whom suffered from seasickness during the engagement.

In the following August (1781) the *Trumbull* was again on duty, this time as an escort to a fleet of twenty-eight merchantmen. Her crew on this occasion was most unfortunately assorted, for, owing to the impossibility of securing enough American seamen, her complement had been filled out with British volunteers; but even then she was short-handed by two hundred men. When off the Capes of the Delaware the fleet was chased by three British cruisers, but night intervening they were eluded. The next day a heavy gale scattered the ships, each one making the best of its way to port, while the *Trumbull* lost her fore-topmast and main-topgallant mast, which, together with the inefficiency of the crew, placed her in a perilous condition. At ten o'clock on the following night the British 32-gun frigate *Iris*—formerly the American 32-gun frigate *Hancock*, captured off Halifax by the *Rainbow* and the *Victor*—and another ship closed on her. The condition of the *Trumbull* at this moment was most unfortunate. The weather came on with rain and squalls, while the wreck of her spars covered the forecastle or dragged over her bow in the sea, and one arm of the fore-topsail yard was thrust through the foresail while the other arm was jammed on the deck. At the first alarm many of the *Trumbull's* crew, after extinguishing the battle lanterns, ran below, leaving the deck entirely dark. Captain Nicholson, with not more than fifty officers and American seamen, en-

deavored to work the crippled ship and fight the enemy. This handful of men made a noble defense, Lieutenant Alexander Murray being especially commended for his gallantry. But the approach of a third English ship—the *General Monk*—rendered further resistance useless, and the colors were struck. Among the American lieutenants was Richard Dale, who served with such distinction in the action between the *Bonhomme Richard* and the *Serapis*. Christopher Raymond Perry, afterward captain, and father of Oliver Hazard Perry, also was in this action. The *Trumbull* was badly cut up, but as so few of her men were engaged in the fight her loss was only five killed and eleven wounded.

Early in October, 1780, the *Saratoga*, Captain James Young, sailed from Philadelphia, and on the 8th of that month discovered and gave chase to three sails. Hoisting English colors, Captain Young decoyed a large, heavily armed ship under his guns, and running alongside he learned that she was an English merchantman from Jamaica bound for New York. Upon this the *Saratoga* changed her flag for the American, poured in a broadside, threw grapnels aboard in the smoke and held the stranger fast, while Lieutenant Joshua Barney, at the head of fifty men, boarded, and after a sharp resistance drove the enemy below. The prize proved to be the *Charming Molly*, with a crew of ninety men.[1] Leaving Lieutenant Barney aboard the *Charming Molly*, Captain Young made all sail after the other two vessels, which by this time were under the horizon, and after a long chase they were overhauled and captured with but little resistance. They were brigs, one mounting fourteen and the other four guns. The *Saratoga* with her prizes then made for port, and while off the Capes of the Delaware she was chased by the British 74-gun ship of the line *In-*

[1] Life of Joshua Barney, p. 85.

trepid, and although she made her escape all her prizes were recaptured. This was the last ever heard of the *Saratoga*. It was thought that she foundered in the gale of the following day.

After his extraordinary action with the *Serapis* Captain Jones remained in Europe several months planning new expeditions against the English coast, and on the 7th of September, 1780, he sailed from France in the 20-gun ship *Ariel*, lent by the king. The *Ariel* was detained a month off the port of L'Orient by unfavorable winds. On the 8th of October she put to sea, but on the same night she encountered a heavy gale, during which her lower yards frequently dipped into the sea. In order to keep her from foundering the foremast was cut away, and soon afterward the heel of the mainmast, having worked out of the step, also went over, bringing down with it the mizzenmast. With great difficulty Captain Jones made his way back to port, and it was not until the 18th of December, 1780, that he sailed again. When two weeks out he fell in with an English ship and began an action. The enemy soon struck, but in the darkness and confusion of the moment made his escape. The name of this ship has not been determined. On the 18th of February, 1781, Captain Jones reached Philadelphia. Congress tendered him a vote of thanks for his brilliant services, and as a token of their high esteem gave him the command of the new 74-gun ship *America*, then nearly completed; but the war ended before she got to sea, when Congress presented her to France in compensation for the 74-gun ship of the line *Magnifique*, which was lost in Boston harbor. For lack of suitable vessels Captain Jones never went to sea again in the service of the United States. At the close of the Revolution his restless spirit led him to seek a new field of activity, and this he found in the Russian service, which he entered with the stipulation that he would be free to offer his services to the United States should

they be called for. In his conflicts with the Turks he again displayed his great skill in seamanship and battle, and at the end of that war he had attained the rank of rear-admiral. In 1792 he was appointed the American consul to Algiers, but before the commission reached him he died in Paris, July 18, 1792.

In February, 1781, the *Alliance*, Captain John Barry, sailed from Boston for France with Colonel Laurens aboard as a passenger. After capturing the privateer *Alert* on the outward passage the frigate arrived at her destination, and on the 31st of March she sailed from L'Orient in company with the French 40-gun letter of marque *Marquis de la Fayette*. The third day out they chased and captured the British 26-gun privateer *Mars*, manned by one hundred and twelve men, and the *Minerva* of ten guns, carrying fifty-five men. From this time the *Alliance* continued her cruise alone, and on the 28th of May two sails were discovered bearing for her. At this time the wind had subsided, so that the *Alliance* lost steerage way, but the strangers, being smaller vessels, had the advantage in the light breeze, and, with the aid of sweeps, selected positions off the frigate's quarter and stern and opened an animated fire. The situation was exasperating in the extreme, for Captain Barry could bring only a few guns to bear, while the enemy were pouring in full broadsides. For fully an hour the English brigs kept up their cannonading with comparative impunity, and finally a shot carried away the American flag. So confident were they of capturing the frigate that they now ceased their fire and hailed to know if she had struck. Captain Barry long before had been desperately wounded in the shoulder with a grape-shot, and was below. As matters stood, the *Alliance* was in a hopeless condition, while further resistance could only result in useless sacrifice of life, but at this moment the ship felt a breeze and gradually gained steerage way. This reversed the state of affairs, for

now, as the frigate's powerful batteries came slowly into play, missiles of destruction began to fly right and left. Running between the two brigs, the *Alliance* delivered her broadsides with full effect and soon compelled the Englishmen to strike. They proved to be the 16-gun brig *Atalanta*, Commander Sampson Edwards, and the 14-gun brig *Trepassey*, Commander James Smith. Captain Smith and five men of the *Trepassey* were killed and ten were wounded, while the *Atalanta* lost five killed and twenty wounded.[1] The former carried one hundred and thirty men and the latter eighty. On this occasion the *Alliance* mounted twenty-eight 18-pounders and twelve 9-pounders. Her loss was eleven killed and twenty-one wounded. The *Trepassey* was sent to England as a cartel, and the *Atalanta* was ordered to the United States, but while endeavoring to run into Boston she was recaptured. The *Alliance* reached port in safety.

In 1779 the *Confederacy*—one of the new frigates built in Norwich, Connecticut, in 1778—commanded by Captain Seth Harding, sailed for Europe with John Jay as a passenger. Taking a southerly course this new frigate experienced a misfortune which frequently befell the vessels of that day. Her rigging had been fitted in the cold climate of New England, and as she approached the warm latitudes to the south her stays and shrouds slacked up to an alarming extent, and while off the Bahamas in this critical condition she was overtaken by a violent gale. All efforts to save her masts were futile, and spar after spar and mast after mast went over the side, until even the bowsprit was cut away, leaving her rolling in the trough of the sea like a log. After being tossed about in this helpless condition for several weeks Captain Harding reached Martinique, where Mr. Jay took passage in the French frigate *l'Aurore*. The *Confederacy* was refitted, and

[1] Allen's History of the British Navy, vol. i, p. 275.

during the remainder of the war she was employed in keeping up communications between the United States and France. While on a return passage from Cape Français, June 22, 1781, laden with military stores, she was chased by a two-decker and a frigate, and as both ships succeeded in getting alongside Captain Harding was compelled to strike. The British ships were the *Orpheus* and the *Roebuck*.

In the early part of 1782—which was practically the last year of the great struggle—the *Deane* (or the *Hague*), Captain Samuel Nicholson, made a cruise of two months and captured four vessels whose armaments aggregated forty-eight guns. In September of the same year the *Deane*, commanded by Captain John Manly, made a cruise in the West Indies, during which she was chased several times; and at one time Captain Manly was compelled to run his ship on a sand bar, but he soon succeeded in getting her off, and after firing thirteen guns in defiance he made his escape.

The last action of the war was fought by the *Alliance*, Captain John Barry. While making a run to Havana this frigate was chased by several English cruisers, and when she was endeavoring to escape from them a French 50-gun ship was sighted. Relying upon her support Captain Barry turned on his pursuers and engaged the enemy's leading ship, the others making for the Frenchman. After a hot cannonade of half an hour the Englishman signaled for assistance, and the *Alliance* stood for the Frenchman in order to arrange some plan of action, but the enemy, finding their forces too light, made their escape. Captain Barry pursued, but as the Frenchman was too dull a sailer to keep in sight the chase was given over. Captain Barry reported three killed and eleven wounded. The ship that engaged the *Alliance* is not definitely known, but was thought to be the 28-gun ship *Sibyl*.

During the latter part of this war some of the privateers and State cruisers were engaged in actions that were

highly creditable. In April, 1782, an action took place between the Pennsylvania State cruiser *Hyder Ally* and the British cruiser *General Monk*, which in many respects was one of the most brilliant affairs of the war. The former was a merchant ship carrying sixteen 6-pounders and a crew of one hundred and ten men, under Lieutenant Joshua Barney. The *Hyder Ally* had orders to convoy a fleet of merchantmen down to the capes and then return to the State jurisdiction, as it was not intended to protect vessels beyond those boundaries. On the 8th of April the convoy dropped down to Cape May Roads, and while the merchantmen were waiting for a breeze to take them to sea two English cruisers were descried standing for them. Lieutenant Barney immediately signaled the merchantmen to make sail up the bay while he covered their retreat. The first Englishman soon came up with the *Hyder Ally*, but after discharging a broadside he passed up the bay after the merchantmen. Lieutenant Barney made no reply to this fire, but reserved himself for the second vessel, which was the 20-gun sloop of war *General Monk*. On came the Englishman, and he was about to pass the *Hyder Ally* as his consort had done, when the Americans fired a broadside at pistol shot, upon which the *General Monk* put about so as to board. Perceiving the intention of the British commander, Lieutenant Barney instructed his men at the wheel to execute his next orders "by the rule of contrary," as he expressed it, and just as the ships were about to foul the quick-witted American commander called out in a loud voice, which he intended to be heard aboard the enemy's vessel: "Hard aport your helm! Do you want him to run aboard of us?" The helmsmen understood their cue, and clapping the wheel hard to the starboard brought the Englishman's jib boom afoul of their fore rigging, which exposed him to a raking fire from the entire American broadside. Immediately lashing the spar to his fore rigging, Lieutenant Barney poured

several broadsides in rapid succession upon the helpless Englishmen, so that in thirty minutes they were obliged to surrender. Hastily securing his prize, Lieutenant Barney made sail up the bay and rejoined his convoy before another English ship, a frigate, could come within range.

The *General Monk*, Captain Rodgers, mounted twenty 9-pounders and carried a crew of one hundred and thirty-six men, of whom twenty were killed and thirty-three were wounded. The *Hyder Ally* mounted sixteen 6-pounders and carried a crew of one hundred and ten men. Her loss was four killed and eleven wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Hyder Ally:	16	96	110	4	11	15	Time 30m.
General Monk:	20	180	136	20	33	53	

Mr. Gilpin, in his Life of Captain Rodgers, accounts for the defeat of the *General Monk* in this wise: "Captain Rodgers soon had melancholy proof that his fears for his guns were too well founded. As soon as they were heated they became quite unmanageable, and many of them overset." It is, of course, to be regretted that the *General Monk's* guns "overset" and became "heated" in the presence of an enemy, but it is remarkable that Mr. Gilpin had not discovered these qualities in the *General Monk's* guns before this action, for he had described her as a most useful and successful ship. On page 54 he says: "While Captain Rodgers commanded this ship [*General Monk*] he took, or assisted in taking, more than sixty vessels from the enemy, though he did not command her above two years." The *General Monk* was taken into the United States service under the name of *General Washington*.

On the 6th of September, 1781, the 20-gun private armed cruiser *Congress*, of Philadelphia, commanded by Mr. Geddes, while cruising off the coast of Georgia

and South Carolina, fell in with the British 16-gun sloop of war *Savage*, Captain Sterling. On discovering the superior force of the Americans Captain Sterling stood off as if to escape, while the *Congress* immediately made sail in chase, and by half past ten o'clock she opened with her bow guns, and at eleven was close on the Englishman's quarter, where an effective fire of musketry was opened, to which the enemy made a spirited reply. Forging ahead, Mr. Geddes engaged in a fierce broadside duel until his rigging became unmanageable, when he fell astern to repair damages. Having done this he again closed with the *Savage*, and in the course of an hour reduced her to a wreck. So near were the vessels at times that the men frequently were scorched by the flashes of their opponent's guns, and it is even asserted that shot were thrown by hand into the opposite ship with effect. The Englishman was now reduced to a deplorable condition, his quarter-deck and forecastle were swept of men, his mizzenmast had gone by the board and the mainmast threatened to follow. At this juncture their boatswain appeared on the forecastle, waved his hat and announced that they had surrendered. The *Congress*, although mounting a few more guns than her opponent, was manned almost entirely by landsmen—owing to the scarcity of seamen —while the *Savage* was a regular cruiser, manned by the regular complement of seamen. The loss in killed or wounded in the *Congress* was thirty, while that of the *Savage*, according to English accounts, was eight killed and twenty-four wounded.

One of the noteworthy features of the struggle for American independence was the prominent part that private enterprise took in the operations on the sea. While not a single Continental cruiser was taken by British privateers, sixteen English cruisers, mounting in all two hundred and twenty-six guns, were taken by American privateers or by private enterprise. They were the 14-gun cruiser *Hichinbrook*, captured by an

American privateer at sea; the 12-gun cruiser *York*, captured by boats from the land; the 10-gun cruiser *Enterprise*, captured by boats from the land; the 14-gun cruiser *West Florida*, captured by boats at Pensacola; the 14-gun cruiser *Hope*, captured by an American privateer; the 10-gun cruiser *Harlem*, captured by an American privateer; the 14-gun cruiser *Coureur*, captured by an American privateer; the 14-gun cruiser *Active*, captured by boats from New York; the 8-gun cruiser *Egmont*, captured by an American privateer; the 20-gun cruiser *Sandwich*, captured by boats from Charleston; the 20-gun cruiser *Germain*, captured by an American privateer; the 14-gun cruiser *Savage*, captured by the Pennsylvania State cruiser *Congress;* the 14-gun cruiser *Snake*, captured by an American privateer; the 20-gun cruiser *General Monk*, captured by the Pennsylvania State cruiser *Hyder Ally;* the 14-gun cruiser *Allegiance*, captured by an American privateer; and the 14-gun cruiser *Prince Edward*, captured by an American privateer.

The total number of Continental vessels lost during the Revolution, by capture, wreck, etc., was twenty-four, carrying in all four hundred and seventy guns. The loss of the British Government war vessels was one hundred and two, carrying in all two thousand six hundred and twenty-two guns. About eight hundred vessels of all kinds were captured from the English by American cruisers, privateers and by private enterprise.

PART SECOND.

WARS WITH FRANCE AND TRIPOLI.

CHAPTER I.

OUTBREAK OF THE WAR WITH FRANCE.

As might have been expected, the termination of the war for American independence found the United States in a deplorable condition. The treasury long before had been exhausted, an enormous debt was saddled upon the people, and, although nominally at peace, Great Britain kept up an insidious war on the young nation; and before treating on commerce she insisted that each State should have separate ministers, while an order in Council excluded from the West Indies all American vessels and American products except in British ships. Not only was the United States harassed by the inimical attitude of England, but the positions assumed by the several States themselves threatened to break the "rope of sand" that bound them together. "The Legislatures of States having ports convenient for foreign commerce taxed the people of States trading through them, others taxed imports from adjoining States, and in some instances the navigation laws treated people of other States as aliens. The authority of Congress was disregarded by violating not only the Treaty of Paris, but treaties with France and Holland."[1]

Such being the political chaos in which the United States was thrown at the close of the Revolution, it was found necessary to sell the few remaining ships of the navy, while their officers and men sought employment in other fields of activity; so that, when peace

[1] Frothingham's Rise of the Republic.

was proclaimed in the United States, April 11, 1783, only the *Alliance*, the *Deane* and the *General Washington* were left as mementos of the gallant fight made by our seamen against the mistress of the ocean. The first of these, the beautiful *Alliance*, was converted into an Indiaman, and in 1787, under the command of Thomas Read, formerly a captain in the navy, she sailed for China.

After long deliberation a constitution was framed and adopted, and on the 30th of April, 1789, it went into effect, with George Washington as President of the United States of America. By this scheme of government the Secretary of War was intrusted with the management of all marine forces, but it was not until the 27th of March, 1794, that a law was passed for the establishment of a navy. By this act six frigates, rating not less than thirty-two guns, were ordered, but it is more than probable that even this step would not have been taken had it not been for the difficulties that arose with Algiers. Soon after the close of the Revolution the Dey of Algiers discovered that a new nation with a commerce had sprung into existence, and he proceeded to extort an annual tribute similar to that paid him by the powers of Europe. On the 25th of July, 1785, the American schooner *Maria*, of Boston, commanded by Isaac Stevens, was seized near the Straits of Gibraltar by an Algerian corsair, and her crew was held in captivity to await ransom, and five days afterward the ship *Dauphin*, of Philadelphia, commanded by Richard O'Brien, met the same fate. Thus twenty-one Americans were thrown into slavery. The reports of these proceedings reached the United States in due time, but such was the opposition to a standing army or a permanent naval force that no decisive action was taken.

The experience of a hundred years has proved the necessity of a permanent and progressive naval force, and has shown that the arguments used against it at

the close of the eighteenth century were groundless; but a brief review of the position taken by the opponents to the establishment of a marine may be interesting. William Maclay, who with Robert Morris represented Pennsylvania in the first United States Senate, thus expresses the feeling of the opposition: "It is the design of the Court party [referring to those who wished the new Government to conform as much as possible to the monarchical ideas of the Old World] to have a fleet and an army. This is but the entering wedge of a new monarchy in America, after all the bloodshed and sufferings of a seven years' war to establish a republic. The Indian War is forced forward to justify our having a standing army, and eleven unfortunate men now in slavery in Algiers is the pretext for fitting out a fleet." In another place he says: "This thing of a fleet has been working among our members all the session. I have heard it break out often. It is another menace to our republican institutions."[1]

Charles W. Goldsborough, who was intimately connected with the navy in its earliest days as chief clerk of the Navy Department and as secretary of the Naval Board, said: "The resolution of the House of Representatives, that a naval force adequate to the protection of the commerce of the United States ought to be provided, was passed by a majority of two voices only. Its adversaries, who were powerful in numbers and in talents, urged with force and eloquence that the force contemplated was inadequate; that the finances of the nation did not justify expensive fleets; that it was a sacred duty as well as a sound policy to discharge the public debt; that older and more powerful nations bought the friendship of Algiers, and we might do the same, or that we might subsidize some of the European naval powers to protect our trade."

Portugal about this time placed a blockade at the

[1] William Maclay's Journal, p. 383.

Straits of Gibraltar, confining the depredations of these rovers to the Mediterranean, which relieved the Americans from further molestations until early in October, 1793, when, by a truce of twelve months, the blockade was removed. Immediately afterward a squadron of four ships—three xebecs and one brig—passed into the Atlantic, and in one cruise captured ten American merchantmen and enslaved one hundred and five citizens. Soon after this they seized the brig *Minerva*, of New York, commanded by Joseph Ingraham, making a total of one hundred and twelve American captives. This act, coupled with the Dey's refusal to treat unless all tribute that he reckoned as being in arrears was paid, induced Congress to authorize the construction of these six frigates. They were laid down as follows: The 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, 1,576 tons, $302,719, at Boston; the 44-gun frigate *President*, 1,576 tons, $220,910, at New York; the 44-gun frigate *United States*, 1,576 tons, $299,336, at Philadelphia; the 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake*, 1,244 tons, $220,678, at Norfolk, Va.; the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, 1,268 tons, $197,246, at Portsmouth, N. H.; the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, 1,265 tons, $314,212, at Baltimore.

According to the report of the Secretary of War, April 1, 1794, these frigates "separately would be superior to any European frigate of the usual dimension; that if assailed by numbers they would always be able to lead ahead; that they would never be obliged to go into action but on their own terms, except in a calm; and that in heavier weather they would be capable of engaging double-decked ships." Thus, at the outset, American naval constructors aimed at a higher standard of war ships than had yet been attained, and that they reached the mark is convincingly shown in the wars with France, Tripoli and England; and at the close of the War of 1812 Great Britain in self-defense was compelled to build ships on "exactly the same plan." Speaking of the con-

struction of these American frigates, James said: "Everything that was new in the navies of England and France was tried, and, if approved, adopted, no matter at what expense. There were no contractors to make a hard bargain pay by deteriorating the quality of the article; no deputies, ten deep, each to get a picking out of the job. The Executive Government agreed directly with the artisans, and not a plank was shifted or a long bolt driven without the scrutinizing eye of one of the captains or commodores—of him, perhaps, who expected at no distant day to risk his life and honor on board the very ship whose equipment he was superintending." To Joshua Humphreys, of Philadelphia, belongs the honor of designing these ships, but many valuable suggestions in their construction, made by experienced commanders who had served in the navy of the Revolution, were adopted. The *United States* was the first of these new cruisers to get into the water, being launched at Philadelphia, July 10, 1797. The *Constellation*, constructed by David Stodert, followed at Baltimore on the 7th of September of the same year; and on the 20th of September, 1797, the *Constitution* was launched at Boston. The *Constitution* was built by George Cloghorne and Mr. Hartly, of Boston. "When she was ready to be launched," said Rear-Admiral George Henry Preble, "Captain Nicholson, who had charge of her construction, left the shipyard to get his breakfast, leaving express orders not to hoist any flag over her until his return, intending to reserve that honor to himself. Among the workmen upon her was a shipwright and calker named Samuel Bentley, who, with the assistance of another workman named Harris, bent on and hoisted the Stars and Stripes during Captain Nicholson's absence. When the captain returned from his breakfast he was very wrathy, and expressed himself in words more strong than polite. Bentley died in Boston in 1852." Congress ordered that the complements of the

44-gun frigates should be three hundred and fifty-nine, and those of the 36-gun frigates three hundred and twelve.

On the 5th of June, 1794, the following were selected to be captains in the new navy: John Barry, Samuel Nicholson, Silas Talbot, Joshua Barney, Richard Dale and Thomas Truxtun. All these men were identified with the struggle for independence, four of them having been captains in the navy. We have followed Captain Barry in the *Lexington*, the *Raleigh*, and in the *Alliance;* Captain Nicholson was commander of the cutter *Dolphin* and the frigate *Deane;* Silas Talbot, though not in command of a Government vessel, gave efficient aid by capturing the schooners *Pigot*, *Lively*, *King George*, *Adventure*, *Elliot* and *Dragon*, besides being associated with several other creditable affairs. Richard Dale was serving as master in the *Lexington* when that vessel was captured by the *Alert*, and he was first lieutenant in the *Bonhomme Richard* during her extraordinary fight with the *Serapis*. Thomas Truxtun was engaged in many daring exploits of the Revolution. Joshua Barney, famous for his action with the *General Monk*, declined to serve, and on the 18th of July, 1794, James Sever was appointed in his place. The lieutenants and other officers were to be selected by these commanders, the first lieutenant under Captain Barry ranking the corresponding officer under Captain Nicholson, and so on through the list.

By an act of Congress, March 27, 1794, the pay in the navy was fixed as follows: Captain, seventy-five dollars a month and six rations a day, twenty-five cents being allowed for each ration; lieutenant, forty dollars and three rations; lieutenant of marines, twenty-six dollars and two rations; chaplain, forty dollars and two rations; sailing master, forty dollars and two rations; surgeon, fifty dollars and two rations; surgeon's mate, thirty dollars and two rations; purser, forty dollars and two rations. The boatswain, gunner, sail-

maker and carpenter received fourteen dollars and two rations. The pay of midshipmen, petty officers, able seamen, ordinary seamen and marines was to be fixed by the President, while they received one ration a day. By an act of July 1, 1797, the pay of a lieutenant of marines was raised to fifty dollars a month, and that of the boatswain, gunner, carpenter and sailmaker to twenty dollars. The rations consisted of—Sunday, a pound and a half of beef, half a pint of rice; Monday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas, four ounces of cheese; Tuesday, a pound and a half of beef, a pound of potatoes; Wednesday, half a pint of rice, two ounces of butter, six ounces of molasses; Thursday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas; Friday, a pound of potatoes, a pound of salt fish, two ounces of butter or one gill of oil; Saturday, a pound of pork, half a pint of peas, four ounces of cheese. One pound of bread and half a pint of spirits, or one quart of beer, were served every day.

On the 30th of April, 1798, the Secretary of the Navy was added to the President's Cabinet, Benjamin Stoddart, of Georgetown, D. C., being the first. The temporary marine corps, hastily organized during the Revolution, became extinct, as did the navy, at the close of that struggle, but by a law of July 11, 1798, a permanent marine corps was established, having eight hundred and eighty-one officers, noncommissioned officers, privates and musicians, all under the command of a major.

In November, 1795, the signing of a treaty between the United States and Algiers obviated the immediate necessity of these frigates, but the *Constitution*, the *United States* and the *Constellation* were completed, the timber and other material for the remaining frigates being sold. Money and presents to the amount of a million dollars were the price of this treaty, and by the last article of it the United States was bound to pay Algiers an annual tribute of twelve thousand

sequins, equal to about twenty-two thousand dollars. Thus the dangerous and shortsighted policy of leaving the nation without an adequate naval force in time of peace was pursued even at this early period of our history. Hardly had peace with Algiers been concluded when trouble with France began. Taking advantage of the unprotected state of our commerce, her cruisers and privateers not only violated the neutrality of American waters by capturing British vessels within the limits, but even seized American merchantmen as lawful prizes. On the principle, apparently, that cure is better than prevention, Congress, on the 27th of April, 1798, or less than three years from the time it bought a degrading peace from a semibarbarous power, passed a law authorizing the purchase or construction of twelve vessels, none of which were to rate over twenty-two guns, and to meet the expense $950,000 were appropriated. Thus, after paying out a million in tribute—which alone would have been sufficient to equip a navy that could have annihilated the marine forces of Algiers[1]—Congress was compelled to double the amount to meet this new difficulty. Soon afterward the President was authorized to order the construction of six ships of the line.

Washington saw the necessity and economy of a permanent naval establishment, and he repeatedly urged the subject upon Congress. In a speech before both Houses, December 7, 1796, he said: "To an active, external commerce the protection of a naval force is indispensable." Not only did Washington promulgate this doctrine, but he maintained that "to secure respect to a neutral flag requires a naval force

[1] Richard O'Brien, of the *Dauphin*, said that the Algerian marine force on the 12th of November, 1793, consisted of four frigates carrying forty-four, thirty-two and twenty-four guns each; one polacre of eighteen guns, one brig of twenty guns; four xebecs of twenty, fourteen and twelve guns each; one brig on the stocks, pierced for twenty guns; and sixty gunboats.

organized and ready to vindicate it from insult or aggression." He furthermore advocated the "gradual creation" of a navy, and said: "Will it not be advisable to begin without delay to provide and lay up the materials for the building and equipping of ships of war, and to proceed in the work by degrees in proportion as our resources shall render it practicable without inconvenience, so that a future war with Europe may not find our commerce in the same unprotected state in which it was found by the present?"

The population of the United States at this time numbered nearly five millions, while the exports from October 1, 1797, to September 30, 1798, were valued at $61,527,097, and the imports at $63,000,000. The total tonnage of the merchant marine was nearly nine hundred thousand tons, valued at $29,397,963.11. The entire cost of the navy from 1794 to 1798, including building, arming, equipping and keeping the ships in commission, was $2,510,730.69; and at a moderate calculation the gain to American merchants in the lowering of insurance, caused by the existence of this naval force, for the year 1798 alone, was $8,655,566.06; so that the economists in Congress, who had been so loudly boasting that they had saved the United States Treasury two or three million dollars by not establishing a navy, had in fact been extorting from the people many times that amount in the form of high insurance, which the absence of a naval force had made necessary, besides paying several millions in tribute to the piratical states of Barbary. View it in whatever light we may, the expense of maintaining a respectable and progressive navy is nothing more than a safe, economical and necessary insurance on the prosperity of the nation.

The depredations of French cruisers and privateers had been so great that on the 2d of March, 1794, Edmund Randolph charged France with flagrant violations of the treaty, and a list of thirty-eight American

vessels carried into French ports by French cruisers and privateers was given. It was not until several years later that Congress gave up all hope of adjusting the difficulty, but on the 4th of May, 1798, the construction of galleys and several small vessels was ordered, and on the 28th of the same month our cruisers were authorized to capture any French vessel that might be found near the coast preying upon American commerce. On the 7th of July, 1798, all treaties with France were abrogated, and American cruisers were ordered to capture French vessels when found within the limits, and two days afterward they were permitted to attack them wherever found, while the President was authorized to issue commissions to privateers. On the 16th of July the construction of three more frigates was ordered. The navy immediately became the favorite branch of the service, and no difficulty was experienced in filling out the complements, in some instances the entire crew being enlisted in a few hours. The sons of leading families of the country eagerly proffered their services and were enrolled as midshipmen, while the merchant marine furnished a supply of experienced men for commanders and lieutenants.[1]

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[1] According to a report made by the Secretary of the Navy, December 24, 1798, the list of available vessels in the American navy comprised the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*,* the 44-gun frigate *United States*,* the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*,* the 24-gun ship *Portsmouth*,* the 18-gun brig *Norfolk*,* the 18-gun brig *Pinckney*,* the 14-gun brig *Eagle*,* the 14-gun brig *Pickering*,* the 14-gun schooner *Scammel*,* the 14-gun schooner *Governor Jay*,* the 14-gun schooner *Virginia*,* the 12-gun schooner *Diligence*,* the 12-gun schooner *South Carolina*,* the 10-gun sloop *General Greene*,* the 24-gun ship *Ganges*, the 24-gun ship *George Washington*, the 24-gun ship *Merrimac*, the 20-gun ship *Baltimore*, the 20-gun ship *Delaware*, the 20-gun ship *Montezuma*, the 18-gun ship *Herald* and the 18-gun brig *Richmond*; total, twenty-two ships, mounting four hundred and fifty-six guns, and having a complement of three thousand four hundred and eighty-four men.

These vessels, except those marked with asterisks, were merchantmen, and poorly adapted for war purposes. The revenue vessels were brigs of

A month before hostilities were declared against France, the *Constellation*, Captain Thomas Truxtun, and the *Delaware*, Captain Stephen Decatur, Sr.—father of Stephen Decatur, famous in the War of 1812—got to sea for the protection of the American coasting trade. When off the Delaware they fell in with the French privateer *Croyable*, of fourteen guns, carrying a crew of fifty-four men. Knowing that this vessel had lately captured several American ships, Captain Decatur seized her and carried her into Philadelphia, where she was refitted and taken into the navy under the name of the *Retaliation*. On the passage of the laws of July 7 and 9, 1798, many of the American cruisers hastened to sea, among them the *Retaliation*, now commanded by Lieutenant William Bainbridge.

At six o'clock on the morning of November 20th this ship, while cruising in the vicinity of Guadeloupe in company with the *Montezuma*, Captain Alexander Murray, and the *Norfolk*, Captain Thomas Williams, discovered three sails to the east-southeast and shortly afterward two more to the west. The *Montezuma* and the *Norfolk* immediately gave chase to the strangers to the west, while Lieutenant Bainbridge in the *Retaliation* was ordered to reconnoiter the supposed English vessels to the east. Running down to them the *Retaliation* gave the private signal of the day, and was answered with a flag at the mizzenmast which could not be distinctly made out, but from the manœuvres of the stranger Lieutenant Bainbridge was

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one hundred and fifty to two hundred tons, carrying a crew of fifty to seventy men. Preble, afterward famous in the War with Tripoli, served in one of these vessels. The vessels of the *Ganges* class were old-fashioned ships carrying long 9- and 6-pounders; the smaller craft carried lighter guns and were deep-waisted. Besides this force several ships of war were built by private subscription. Along the southern seaboard eight large galleys were kept for coast defense. The *Ganges*, Captain Richard Dale, was the first United States man-of-war to get to sea under the Constitution. She was ordered to cruise from the eastern end of Long Island to the Capes of Virginia.

inclined to believe that they were British cruisers, as the English ship *Scourge* had been seen the day before bearing down on two vessels of similar appearance. In consequence of this the strangers were allowed to approach too near, and it was not until they were almost within gunshot that Lieutenant Bainbridge discovered them to be French frigates, when he immediately crowded all sail to escape, and signaled the *Montezuma* and the *Norfolk*. The leading French ship, the 36-gun frigate *Insurgent*, Captain Barreaut, proved a remarkably fast sailer and soon compelled the *Retaliation* to strike; so that although the *Retaliation* was the first vessel taken from the French, she was also the first captured from the Americans. The *Insurgent* then resumed her course after the *Montezuma* and the *Norfolk*, while Lieutenant Bainbridge was taken aboard the second French ship, the *Volontaire*, Captain St. Laurent. When Lieutenant Bainbridge presented his sword to the French commander the latter returned it, remarking: "You had, sir, no opportunity to defend yourself. I therefore beg you to retain your sword."

By this time the *Insurgent* was far ahead in hot pursuit of the *Montezuma* and the *Norfolk* and was fast overhauling them. The *Volontaire*, having put a prize crew aboard the *Retaliation*, made sail after her consort, then far to the east. Lieutenant Bainbridge joined the group of French officers watching the chase from the forecastle of the *Volontaire*, and, just as they were expecting to see the *Insurgent* open fire on the American ships, Captain St. Laurent abruptly turned to Lieutenant Bainbridge and inquired the force of the two ships the *Insurgent* was pursuing. With great presence of mind the American officer replied, "The ship has twenty-eight 12-pounders, and the brig twenty 9-pounders," which was double their actual force, and would have rendered them too formidable for the *Insurgent* alone to attack. Greatly alarmed at the unexpected force of the chase, Captain St. Laurent directed

his signal officer to recall the *Insurgent*. On coming within hail Captain Barreaut stepped to the gangway to hail his senior officer, and said, "Had you not signaled me, sir, I would have captured those ships in ten minutes."

"Citizen captain," replied Captain St. Laurent, "the *Insurgent* was not heavy enough to attack the ships you were chasing. They were armed with 12- and 9-pounders." Captain Barreaut answered with considerable excitement that there was not a gun in either vessel heavier than a 6-pounder. On hearing this Captain St. Laurent turned upon Lieutenant Bainbridge and said severely, "Did you not say, sir, that the force of those vessels was such as I have stated?" The American officer as sternly replied that if he could save the ships of his Government by misrepresenting their strength he felt justified in doing so. The *ruse* gave rise to much ill-concealed vexation among the French officers, but both Captain St. Laurent and Captain Barreaut continued to treat Lieutenant Bainbridge with all due courtesy.

Perhaps no one was more surprised at the sudden abandonment of the chase than were Captain Murray and Captain Williams, of the *Montezuma* and the *Norfolk*, for they had given over all hopes of eluding their swift and powerful foe; but when the *Insurgent* turned back they made the best of the opportunity, so that by the time the French commanders were comparing notes the American ships were not in sight. The *Montezuma* continued her cruise in the West Indies until October, 1799, when she returned to port to refit. The *Volontaire* and the *Insurgent* continued on their course, and on the following day they reached Guadeloupe with their prize, where the American prisoners were landed.

The unsettled condition of political affairs in the West Indies at this time is shown by the treatment Lieutenant Bainbridge and his men received on their

arrival at Basse Terre. General Desfourneaux, governor of the island, who was described as a man of "fine talents, courtly manners and insinuating address," after expressing great friendship for Lieutenant Bainbridge, intimated that "much individual advantage" might result if the island of Guadeloupe were considered neutral in the war, and he suggested that Lieutenant Bainbridge should lend his influence to secure this end. The American officer indignantly refused to enter into such a scheme, upon which the Americans were treated with great brutality and reduced almost to starvation. General Desfourneaux said this treatment was due to the orders of the notorious Victor Hughes, the deposed governor of the island, and that no change could be made until he had left the port. In a few days the disgraced governor was sent aboard the *Volontaire* as a national prisoner, and the Americans anticipated better treatment, but instead of this they were subjected to even greater cruelty than before. Lieutenant Bainbridge informed General Desfourneaux that the seamen were nearly in a state of starvation ; that among them were a number of highly respectable masters of vessels, and that they were almost daily insulted, beaten and confined in a dungeon by a drunken and brutal jailer. But the remonstrance proved of no avail.

On Christmas night, when a few of the seamen were amusing themselves with songs, dancing and a rude theatrical performance, in celebration of the day and as a means of relieving the monotony of their imprisonment, the jailer and his assistants rushed into the apartment, and seizing twelve of the prisoners from their hammocks while they were still undressed, threw them into a damp dungeon which had only a small opening at the top for the admission of light and air. After much importunity Lieutenant Bainbridge was allowed to visit the dungeon, and found his countrymen in the cold place nearly naked, with

nothing to eat except a little raw salt beef, and nothing to interpose between their bodies and the muddy ground, the jailer refusing even to give them their clothes.

A few days after this the French frigate *Ponsea* arrived at Guadeloupe having twenty to thirty American prisoners aboard, taken by French privateers, and they had been compelled to act as a part of the frigate's crew. Lieutenant Bainbridge requested that they be landed as prisoners of war, for in their present position they might be compelled to fight against their flag. The wily governor immediately saw his opportunity, and again suggested that this might be done provided the American officers conformed to his wishes in the matter of making Guadeloupe neutral; but as Lieutenant Bainbridge still refused, the *Ponsea* sailed for France two days afterward with her prisoners.

Not long after this the governor again endeavored to bring the Americans to terms. He sent a courteous message to Lieutenant Bainbridge offering to restore the *Retaliation* and release all citizens of the United States on the island if his trade with the United States was unmolested. As Lieutenant Bainbridge refused to accede to these terms the governor threatened to put him in irons; but a few days afterward, finding it impossible to coerce the Americans, he released them, and using the *Retaliation* as a cartel sent three hundred of them to the United States. He forwarded a dispatch by Lieutenant Bainbridge to the President of the United States, demanding the neutrality of Guadeloupe and free commerce with the United States; and he threatened, if this were not granted, to put to death every American prisoner who afterward fell into his hands.

In the middle of July the *United States*, Captain John Barry, having in company the *Delaware*, Captain Stephen Decatur, Sr., got to sea with instructions to cruise off Cape Cod, where it was intended to have the

Herald, Captain James Sever, meet him. The *United States* on this cruise carried many officers who afterward became distinguished. They were: David Ross, first lieutenant; Mr. Mullany, second lieutenant; James Barron, third lieutenant; Charles Stewart, fourth lieutenant. Among the midshipmen were Richard Somers, Stephen Decatur, Jr., James R. Caldwell, Jacob Jones and William Montgomery Crane.

On his way to Cape Cod Captain Barry discovered a heavy frigate sailing under French colors, and he immediately displayed the same flag, and signaled the *Delaware* to haul off so that he could engage the enemy single-handed. The stranger made every preparation to meet the American ship, and tried to gain the weather gauge. In this the commanders displayed great skill, but after manœuvring a long time the *United States* secured the vantage point and closed on the enemy; but just as she was about to open fire the stranger showed English colors, and hailed that she was the British 50-gun ship *Thetis*. In order to avoid a repetition of what nearly proved to be a serious mistake, Admiral Vandeport proposed a set of signals by which American and British cruisers could know each other. The code was accepted and was used for many years. Soon afterward the French privateers *Sans Pareil*, of sixteen guns and eighty-seven men, and *Jaloux*, of fourteen guns and seventy men, were captured by the *United States* and the *Delaware*. Subsequently, while cruising alone, the *Delaware* took the *Marsouin*, of ten guns.

On the 10th of the following August the *Constellation*, Captain Thomas Truxtun, and the *Baltimore*, Captain Isaac Phillips, sailed for Havana, where a fleet of sixty American merchant ships was awaiting convoy. Several French cruisers also were lying in port ready to attack the fleet as soon as it cleared the land, but the presence of the American men of war prevented trouble, and the ships arrived at their destination in safety.

While the *Baltimore* was engaged in this service an incident occurred which created great excitement in the United States, and did much toward opening the eyes of the people to the necessity of maintaining a permanent and efficient marine force. Although Great Britain at this time was also carrying on an active war against France, her cruisers in several instances perpetrated outrages on American seamen and on the American flag. On the 16th of November, while convoying merchant vessels from Charleston to Havana, the *Baltimore* fell in with a British squadron under the command of Captain Loring, consisting of the 74-gun ship of the line *Carnatic*, flagship; the 98-gun ship of the line *Queen*, Captain Dobson; the 74-gun ship of the line *Thunderer*; the 32-gun frigate *Maidstone*; and the 32-gun frigate *Grayhound*, Captain Hardy. As soon as the British vessels were made out Captain Phillips, distrusting their respect for the rights of the American vessels on the high seas, signaled his convoy to make all sail before the wind while he ran down to reconnoiter.

On going aboard the *Carnatic* Captain Phillips was informed that every man in the *Baltimore* not provided with an American "protection" would be impressed. Captain Phillips protested against this, and avowed his determination to surrender his ship before he would countenance such a measure, but on returning to the *Baltimore* he found a British lieutenant in the act of mustering the crew. Taking the roll from that officer's hands he ordered him to the lee side, and then sent the men to their quarters. But in the presence of such a squadron the *Baltimore* was powerless, and Captain Phillips was compelled to surrender the muster roll and call up all hands for inspection. Fifty-five men were selected and taken aboard the *Carnatic*, fifty of whom, however, were returned. Having in the mean time seized three vessels of the American convoy, under his own interpretation of the rules of blockade,

Captain Loring sailed for Havana, after acknowledging that he had a number of Americans in his crew. The three merchantmen, after a vexatious and unnecessary delay, were released and proceeded on their voyage. Captain Phillips, on the 10th of January, 1799, was dismissed from the service, and his course of nonresistance was pronounced most culpable.[1]

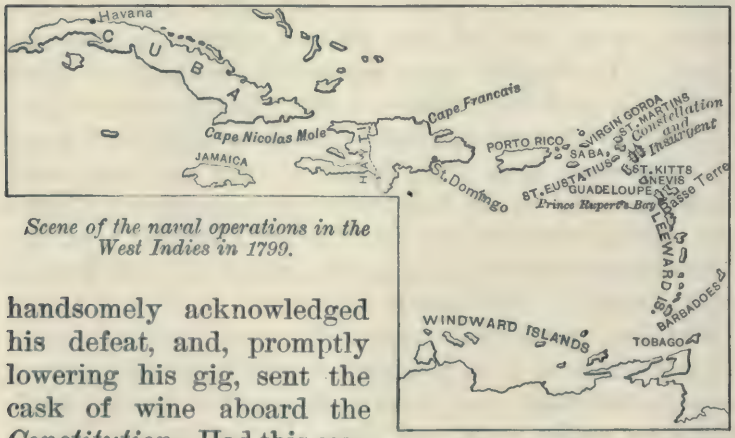
[1] Secretary of the Navy to Captain Phillips, January 10, 1799.

CHAPTER II.

A VIGOROUS NAVAL WAR AGAINST FRANCE.

The War with France afforded the first opportunity to test the new American frigates, which, by combining heavy armaments with great speed, were designed to be superior to any ship of the same class afloat. Their arrival in the West Indies was awaited with much curiosity and with not a little covert merriment by the English and French officers on that station. The English were especially emphatic in their predictions of the failure of the "monstrous and preposterous" armaments carried in these ships, and many a messroom rang with laughter over the imaginary mishaps that would befall the presumptuous attempts at naval architecture by "rebel subjects," as the Americans were still graciously called by their friends the English. The result of several actions between American and French cruisers did much toward changing the tune of their laughter, but British officers were not yet satisfied, and, wishing to know if Yankee-built frigates really could sail with any respectable speed, the commander of an English cruiser, while on blockade duty on the St. Domingo station, challenged Captain Silas Talbot, of the *Constitution*, to an all-day race, wagering a cask of wine on the result. The younger American officers were immediately on their mettle, especially as the British ship had the reputation of being one of the best sailers in the West Indies, and they begged Captain Talbot to accept the challenge, and, as making an agreeable break in the monotony of the cruise, the American commander consented.

Isaac Hull at this time was first lieutenant in the *Constitution* and had the reputation of being one of the most skillful navigators of his day, and, as Farragut in later years remarked, "he was as able a seaman as ever sailed a ship." The race began at daybreak and lasted until the sun went down, and Lieutenant Hull kept all hands constantly on deck, not even allowing them time to go below for mess. The *Constitution* had it all her own way from the start, and just as the sun was disappearing below the horizon she fired her evening gun, the signal that the race was ended, and hove to, waiting for the Englishman to come up. When within hail the British commander



Scene of the naval operations in the West Indies in 1799.

handsomely acknowledged his defeat, and, promptly lowering his gig, sent the cask of wine aboard the *Constitution*. Had this captain lived sixteen years longer, the mortification of his defeat would have been considerably diminished by learning that eighteen British frigates and several ships of the line subsequently endeavored to overtake the *Constitution* with a similar want of success.

French privateers by this time had become so numerous and daring in the West Indies that the Government found it necessary to direct all its naval force against them. Accordingly, a squadron commanded by Captain John Barry was ordered to rendezvous at

Prince Rupert's Bay, and to cruise to windward of St. Kitts and as far south as Barbadoes and Tobago. It consisted of the following vessels: The *United States*, Captain John Barry; the *Constitution*, Captain Samuel Nicholson; the *George Washington*, Captain Patrick Fletcher; the *Merrimac*, Captain Moses Brown; the *Portsmouth*, Captain Daniel McNiell; the *Pickering*, Master-Commandant Edward Preble; the *Eagle*, Lieutenant Hugh George Campbell; the *Herald*, Lieutenant Charles C. Russell; the *Scammel*, Lieutenant J. Adams; and the *Diligence*, Lieutenant J. Brown. The *Merrimac* took *le Bonaparte*, *le Phénix*, of fourteen guns and one hundred and twenty-eight men, and *la Magicienne*, of fourteen guns and sixty-three men; the *Portsmouth* took *le Bonaparte* (No. 2), *la Brillanté*, *le Fripon* and *le Bon Père*, of six guns and fifty-two men. Seven other captures were made by this squadron.

On the 3d of February, while the *United States* was cruising to windward of Martinique, chase was given to a suspicious sail. As there was a fresh breeze at the time the American frigate soon had the stranger, which proved to be a French privateer, under her guns. Finding that he was outsailed on this point, the Frenchman, as a last hope, went about and boldly endeavored to turn to windward by short tacks, under the guns of the frigate. A single well-aimed 24-pound shot from the *United States* cut the career of the privateer short, for the ball went through her hull between wind and water, so that she quickly began to fill and settle. The sudden lowering of her sails, the confusion aboard her and the cries of her people for aid, told plainly enough that one shot was sufficient. The *United States* promptly hove to and lowered her boats to the rescue. Midshipman Stephen Decatur was in the boat that first reached the wreck, and he found her crew collected on her rails, stripped of their plunder and clothes, ready to swim to the boats. "They

were plaintively imploring for help," wrote an eyewitness, "with earnest gesticulations, not only from men but from God, and although it is true they had abolished all religion, they had not, it seemed, forgot the old way of invoking the protection of the Omnipotent." Seeing that the boats would be swamped if they came within reach of the frantic privateersmen, the American officer in charge ordered the Frenchmen to put their helm up and run down to the frigate. This was done at once, and the privateer, which was the *Amour de la Patrie*, of six guns and eighty men, sank near the *United States;* her men jumped clear of her, other boats were lowered, and all were saved. The *United States* also took the privateer *Tartufe*, of eight guns and sixty men.

Desiring to relieve himself of his prisoners, and hoping to liberate an equal number of Americans who were confined in the loathsome dungeons at Guadeloupe, Captain Barry put into the roads of Basse Terre with the white flag of truce at his fore, but when within effective range the French batteries opened on her. Quickly hauling down the white flag, Captain Barry sailed around the harbor and returned the fire so effectively that the walls of the batteries bore the marks of American shot for many years afterward.

A second squadron, under Captain Thomas Truxtun, which cruised in the vicinity of Porto Rico, St. Martins and the Virgin Gorda, consisted of the *Constellation*, Captain Thomas Truxtun; the *Baltimore*, Captain Isaac Phillips; the *Norfolk*, Captain Thomas Williams; the *Richmond*, Captain Samuel Barron; and the *Virginia*, Captain Francis Bright. These ships captured nine privateers, carrying in all forty guns. A third squadron, under Captain Thomas Tingey, consisting of the *Ganges*, Captain Thomas Tingey, the *Pinckney*, Lieutenant Samuel Heywood, and the *South Carolina*, Lieutenant J. Payne, was stationed between Cuba and Hayti, and captured six privateers,

the *Ganges* taking *le Vainqueur*, *l'Eugene* and *l'Espérance*. The *Delaware*, Captain Stephen Decatur, Sr., and the revenue cutters *Governor Jay*, Lieutenant George Price, and *General Greene*, Lieutenant J. W. Leonard, cruised near Havana. By this distribution of the naval force over sixty privateers were seized, while many picaroons, who were in the habit of attacking becalmed merchant ships near shore, were severely punished.

While cruising off Cape Nicolas Mole the *Ganges* was boarded by a boat from the British cruiser *Surprise* for the purpose of impressing all seamen who happened to be without American "protection" papers. Captain Tingey refused to have his ship searched, and said: "A public ship carries no protection for her men but her flag. I do not expect to succeed in the action with you, but I will die at my quarters before a man shall be taken from the ship." The crew was then sent to quarters and the guns manned to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Perceiving the determination of the Americans, the British commander sailed without attempting to seize any of the crew.

At half past twelve on the 9th of February the *Constellation*, Captain Truxtun, while cruising near St. Kitts, discovered a sail to the south-southeast, the Island of Nevis bearing fifteen miles west by south. The frigate was put before the wind, which was fresh from the north-northeast, so as to cross the stranger's course, and at 1 P. M. the chase was standing close-hauled on the port tack. Half an hour later a squall necessitated shortening of sail, and for a few minutes the vessels were shut out of view, but when the weather cleared up it was seen that the stranger had lost her main-topmast, and had changed her course to "north-west, one quarter north," with a view of running into St. Eustatius. Soon afterward she hoisted an American flag, upon which Captain Truxtun showed his colors and gave the private signal of the day, and also the

signal agreed upon by American and British commanders. As the chase did not answer, there was no doubt of his nationality. Presently he hoisted French colors, fired a gun to leeward in "confirmation," and headed to the southeast, the *Constellation* rapidly coming up with him.

The first division of the gun deck of the *Constellation*, at this time consisting of five guns on each side, was commanded by First-Lieutenant John Rodgers (afterward famous in the War of 1812); the second division of five guns on each side was commanded by Second-Lieutenant William Cowper; and the third division of four guns on each side by Third-Lieutenant Andrew Sterett. Fourth-Lieutenant John Archer was stationed on the quarter-deck.

About 3.15 P. M., when within pistol shot, the Frenchman hailed but Captain Truxtun did not answer. The chase hailed again, when the *Constellation*, having gained a position off her port quarter, poured in a full broadside. This was promptly returned, and the firing became steady. After the first broadside the enemy luffed up to run aboard, but owing to the loss of his main-topmast he was not quick enough, so that the *Constellation*, forging ahead, ran across his course and raked. Captain Truxtun then passed along the enemy's starboard side, and having received no material damage in his spars or rigging he was able to keep his ship off the Frenchman's starboard bow, in a position which he maintained fully an hour, pouring in and receiving broadsides. During this time an 18-pound shot struck the *Constellation's* fore-topmast just above the cap, and so weakened it that it tottered, and was in imminent danger of giving way under the press of sail. Midshipman David Porter (afterward captain) who was stationed in the foretop, hailed the deck, giving notice of the danger, but in the excitement and uproar of battle no order was sent up. Seeing the urgency of the occasion, young Porter, with great judgment and

presence of mind, went aloft, cut the stoppers and lowered the yard, thus relieving the mast of the pressure of sail and preventing a serious mishap.

The *Constellation* now drew out of the smoke which had gathered around the two ships, and running across the enemy's course poured in a second raking broadside. Then ranging alongside the Frenchman's port bow she opened a heavy fire from her starboard battery, which soon dismounted every 18-pounder on the enemy's main deck, leaving him with only his battery of 12-pounders.[1] About 4.30 P. M., the *Constellation* dropped astern, crossed the enemy's wake and was about to rake for the third time, when the Frenchman struck.



Diagram of the battle. C, Constellation.

A boat was immediately sent aboard the prize, which soon returned with Captain Barreaut and the first lieutenant of the French 36-gun frigate *Insurgent*, the same that in the preceding year had chased the *Montezuma* and the *Norfolk*.

There has been much error among naval writers concerning the *Insurgent's* armament. Cooper merely says that it consisted of forty guns, her main deck battery being French twelves. James, an English naval historian, in his estimate, gives the *Insurgent* twenty-six long 18-pounders on the main deck, while Troude, a French naval historian, gives her 12-pounders instead of 18-pounders on the main deck.[2] On the other hand,

[1] Official report of the French commander.

[2] Batailles Navales de la France, tome iii. p. 169.

Troude gives the *Constellation* twenty-eight 12-pounders on the main deck, whereas she carried 24-pounders. James, moreover, says, "The nature of *l'Insurgent's* guns nowhere appears."

These conflicting statements rise from lack of information on the subject, and the impossibility at that time of getting at the official report of the French commander. Through the courtesy of Admiral Aube, of the French navy, late Minister of Marine, the author was permitted to search the archives of the Department of the Marine and Colonies at Paris, and there found the official reports of the French commanders concerned in our war with France—1798–1801. The report of Captain Barreaut throws much light on this action, and determines the *Insurgent's* armament, which up to this time has been in doubt. This report describes the *Constellation's* main deck guns as 24-pounders, or twice the weight Troude gives her. From Captain Barreaut's report it is seen that the *Insurgent* carried 18-pounders on the main deck: "J'étais dans un grand embarras, vos ordres étaient de ne tirer sur le pavillon américain, une frégate anglaise pouvait bien s'en servir pour éviter nos coups de canon de 18 en retraite qui l'eurent beaucoup endommagé pendant 1 heure ½ et m'eut donné le temps de me sauver."[1] Here we see that Captain Barreaut speaks of his "canon de 18," and in the same report he mentions his "canons de 18," leaving no doubt as to the plural number. He mentions his 18-pounders in three separate places. This, together with the fact that an 18-pound shot struck the *Constellation's* fore-topmast in the action, proves that she carried a battery of 18-pounders. Again Captain Barreaut says: "After two hours of battle, totally unrigged, the frigate like a hulk, having for all defense one battery of 12-pounders," etc.[2] This

[1] Official report of Captain Barreaut.

[2] "Deux heures de combat, totalement degré, la frégate comme un ponton ayant pour toute défense une batterie de 12."



The Constellation raking the Insurgent.

shows that the *Insurgent* also had a battery of 12-pounders. In no portion of his long report of this action does Captain Barreaut mention, or in any way intimate, that his ship carried other than 18- and 12-pounders.

All authorities agree that the *Insurgent* carried forty guns;[1] which, as the rating of French frigates was peculiarly regular, places her as a 36-gun frigate. The French 36-gun frigate carried twenty-six long guns on the main deck, ten long guns on the quarter-deck and forecastle, and four 36-pound carronades on the quarter-deck and forecastle, in all forty guns. According to Troude:[2] "*L'Insurgente* portait vingt-six canons de 12, portait dix canons de 6 et quatre carronades de 36." We have seen that Captain Barreaut admits having a battery of 18-pounders and one of 12-pounders, but no where does he mention 6-pounders. There can be no doubt, then, that the *Insurgent* carried twenty-six long 18-pounders on the main deck, ten long 12-pounders on the quarter-deck and forecastle, and four short 36-pounders, which were carried in all French frigates of that class. The *Constellation* mounted twenty-eight long 24-pounders on the main deck and twenty long 12-pounders on the quarter-deck and forecastle; carronades had not as yet been introduced in our navy. Her crew numbered three hundred and nine, of whom one was killed by the officer commanding the third division of the gun deck, Third-Lieutenant Andrew Sterett, for deserting his gun early in the action, and three were wounded, among the latter being Midshipman James Macdonough, who lost a foot.

Neither Captain Barreaut in his official report nor Troude makes any statement regarding the *Insurgent's* complement. Captain Truxtun, in his official report, says the French frigate carried a crew of four hundred

[1] Official report of Captain Truxtun; Cooper's Naval History, vol. ii, p. 169; Troude, tome iii, p. 169; James' Naval Occurrences, p. 63, etc.

[2] Batailles Navales de la France, tome iii, p. 169.

and nine men, of whom twenty-nine were killed, twenty-two badly wounded and nineteen slightly wounded. Captain Barreaut in reference to his losses merely remarks: "About fifty killed or wounded." As he was immediately taken aboard the *Constellation* and had no opportunity to compute his losses accurately, it is probable that the minute report of Captain Truxtun is correct. Allowing for the deficiency of American metal in weight, we find that the total weight of the *Constellation's* shot was eight hundred and forty-eight pounds. A French pound was eight per cent heavier than an English pound; for example, a French 12-pound shot weighed thirteen English pounds, and a 24-pound French shot weighed twenty-six English pounds. Calculating on this basis, we find the *Insurgent's* total weight of metal to be seven hundred and ninety-one English pounds.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Constellation:	48	848	309	2	3	5	Time
Insurgent:	40	791	409	29	41	70	1 h. 14 m.

Captain Barreaut made a noble defense, but the misfortune of losing his main-topmast at a critical moment placed him at disadvantage. Captain Truxtun in his official report says: "I must not omit to do justice to Monsieur Barreaut, for he defended his ship manfully, and from my raking him several times fore and aft, and being athwart his stern, ready with every gun to fire when he struck his colors, we may impute the conflict not being more bloody on our side; for had not these advantages been taken the engagement would not have ended so soon." But the effects of the *Insurgent's* fire as seen on the *Constellation* showed that French gunnery, like the English, was inferior. The loss of the *Insurgent* is attributable to these two facts, for the Frenchmen fought gallantly, and surrendered only when further resistance would

have been culpable. Captain Truxtun spoke in the highest terms of the gallantry of all his officers, and especially mentioned Lieutenants John Rodgers, William Cowper, Andrew Sterett, John Archer and Sailing-Master Ambrose Shirley. The other officers in the ship were Bartholomew Clinch, lieutenant of marines; Henry Vandyke, John Herbert Dent, Philip C. Wederstrandt, John M. Clagett, James Macdonough, David Porter, William Davis, Joshua Herbert, Arthur Sinclair (afterward captain) and Thomas Robinson, midshipmen; Samuel B. Brooks, John S. Smith and Daniel Gorman, master's mates.[1] The merchants of London

[1] The following is Captain Barreaut's official account of the action:

"At Pitre Point, Liberty Port, this 29th Pluviose, year 7 of the French Republic. Barreaut, Frigate Captain, to the Citoyen Desfourneaux Particulier of the Executive Directory for the Windward Islands.

"Citizen General: It is my duty and desire to give you an exact account of my conduct on the 21st Pluviose, and of the unfortunate events following it. I shall not deviate from the truth, and as agent and military commander I beg that you will judge me.

"The 21st Pluviose, about three leagues off the northeast point of Nevis, which then bore N. W. by N., the wind east, the lookout called at 12.30 P. M., that there was a sail to the windward of us. I continued my course for another half hour; then, having mounted the foreyard with Citizen Petit Pierre, I saw that the stranger was making for us. I then kept away to the northwest with the intention of running between Saba and St. Kitts, but this vessel in approaching appeared to me and to all on the yards to be a corvette from the trim of her sails. Having, Citizen agent, engraved upon my heart your words—'You are going to see how a good crew conduct themselves': I think a corvette would not frighten you—I believed it was the moment to show our haughty enemies [the English] that, in spite of the superiority of their forces, vessels of war might still be captured from them. I wished also to inspire confidence in my crew, and I hauled by the wind, every one burning with ardor for the fight.

"At one o'clock I went about on the same tack as this vessel, which continued to chase us, and at 1.30 P. M., in a squall in which the topgallant sails were taken in, the Citizen Durand then commanding the manœuvre, the main-topmast fell—source of all our misfortune. Immediately, upon the advice of the coasting pilot, I steered to the N. W. by N. to make St. Eustatius if I had time to gain the anchorage. The vessel, which I could see was a frigate, chased me. I had hoisted the American flag; she signaled me and also hoisted an American flag.

gave Captain Truxtun a handsome piece of plate for "having captured a French frigate of superior force."

"I found myself in a position to no longer avoid an engagement, and as the stranger still pursued me it became necessary to ascertain her nationality. I therefore lowered the American flag and hoisted French colors with pennant, which I confirmed by a cannon shot to leeward. She hoisted her broad pennant with the American flag without confirming. I doubted yet that she was an American. I was much embarrassed by your orders, which were not to fire on the American flag. Thus an English frigate could easily have made use of this flag while chasing us, thereby avoiding the fire of our 18-pounder, with which we could have seriously injured her [the *Constellation*] during the hour and a half she was overtaking us, and thus have given me time to save myself.

"Again, if I had fired on the American frigate, with what reproach would you not have overwhelmed me! If I had commenced hostilities, and in the end had been defeated all the blame would have been on me; and it would have been said that, 'The instructions of captains of American frigates did not permit them to fire on the Republic's vessels.'

"Lastly, it stands to reason that, having lost my main-topmast, I gave the advantage to a frigate of double my strength in letting her approach within pistol shot before defending myself. I was thus obliged to receive a full broadside from a frigate of 24 and 12-pounders, deliberately aimed at pistol shot, which broadside made terrible havoc in my quarter-deck.

"At three o'clock the combat began. Judge of my surprise on finding myself fought by an American frigate, after all the friendship and protection accorded to the United States! My indignation was at its height. As soon as my first broadside was fired I cried, and with all the men on the quarter-deck and forecastle, 'Stand by to board!' My cabin was invaded to get arms, and I ran to the helm to luff her in order to run aboard the American frigate. *L'Insurgente* obeyed the first impulse, but, as she was without sails amidships and as we were not able to move the others quickly enough, the American frigate had time to run ahead of us, and having all her sails set she was beyond us, which compelled us to man the other battery.

"My only remaining resource were my guns and an 18-pounder of the port battery; and manœuvring with much difficulty, we fired three broadsides. The American frigate now seemed to suspend her fire and I ordered Citizen Jourdan to suspend ours, thinking that the American captain might still be considering his conduct. But he again opened on us, so I gave orders to fire also. This frigate did not remain abeam of us, but sought by every means to take advantageous positions and completely to dismantle us. I endeavored to repair the rigging. The mizzen-topmast had fallen in the top, the spanker was completely riddled. All that I could do was to take it in. The braces, fore bowlines, and fore topsails were completely cut through, our topmen without doubt killed, as they did

Immediately upon the surrender of the *Insurgent* Lieutenant John Rodgers, with Midshipman David Por-

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not reply; the master did not appear upon the bridge, no quartermasters were left, only a bridgeman and the masters. All I could do was to give the order to Citizen Sire to square everything; the only after sail was the mizzen. The American frigate still having all her sails, which were only slightly injured, and moving very easily, was at pistol range ahead of us.

"Finally, as my position was hopeless, it soon became necessary to surrender to very superior forces. Seeing many men wounded and killed about the decks, I decided to pass forward of the gangway to consult my lieutenant. At this moment the topmen cried out, 'Two ships to windward coming down on us, and they are large vessels.' I said to my second: 'Rather than strike to two English ships in my disabled condition, I prefer to surrender to the American frigate, which I believe has not the right to take me,' being persuaded that war did not exist between the two nations.

"After two hours' combat, totally dismantled, the ship like a hulk, having as our only defense a battery of 12-pounders, yet well provided with a crew and ammunition, comparing her to a disabled battery against a frigate of 24- and 12-pounders, about fifty men killed or wounded, my second said to me, 'Do as you please.' No objection from the others. I thought it necessary to strike, so that I might have a chance to speak to the American commander.

"The American frigate then sent its boat aboard to take me and my second aboard their ship, we carrying nothing with us. My first question was: 'Why have you fired upon the national flag? Our two nations are not at war.' His only reply was, 'You are my prisoner,' and he made us go below and took our arms from us. This conduct surprised me, the more so after the last news from Europe received through the corvette *la Sagesse*, and after the statement of the Citizen Marin, who declared at the Point that the captain of the frigate *Constitution* [Nicholson] had told him that if he had overtaken me he would not have fired the first shot on me, but that if I had fired he would have replied.

"This is an exact account of my conduct. I have done everything I could in such unfortunate circumstances. I thought that about two hours of combat, the total dismantlement of my frigate, fifty men *hors de combat*, were sufficient. A greater obstinacy would have caused a greater loss of men without having any hope of escape. An hour later I should have been compelled to surrender anyhow. All just and impartial seamen will tell you that I should have been taken. My hope was that Captain Truxtun, commanding the *Constellation*, had taken altogether too much upon himself in firing first upon us.

"The next morning I reported to him what the captain of the *Constitution* had said to one of my midshipmen. He replied that he had special

ter and eleven men, was placed aboard the prize to superintend the transfer of prisoners. While this work was going on, the wind, which had been fresh all the afternoon, came on to a gale, and by sunset it was so violent as to make it impossible to remove the remaining prisoners (of whom one hundred and seventy-three were still in the *Insurgent*) or to re-enforce the Americans aboard her. During the night the ships were separated, and on the following morning Lieutenant Rodgers anxiously scanned the horizon, but no trace of the *Constellation* could be seen. There was nothing but an unbroken stretch of angry white-capped seas on all sides. His position in the shattered prize was critical, for he had only Midshipman Porter and eleven seamen to guard his one hundred and seventy-three prisoners and to navigate the ship. Furthermore, the *Insurgent* had been nearly dismasted in the action, and now rolled in the trough of the sea in a most alarming manner, while her weakened masts tottered and bent, threatening to come down with every lurch of the ship. Her decks resembled a slaughter house, the dead and the dying not having been removed, and the blood stains not having been washed with hot vinegar.

On examination, it was discovered that the gratings for the hatchways, the ordinary means of securing pris-

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instructions, known only to himself, and that three months before war had been declared in France. You can imagine how much surprised I was, remembering your particular orders and instructions [i. e., not to fire on the American flag], and I make bold to assure you that if I had been able, during the two hours that the American frigate was in our wake, within range of my two long 18-pound stern chasers, to fire on her, I should have made it impossible for her to overtake me.

"My honor, existence, all are compromised by the duplicity of this infamous government. [Signed]

"BARREAUT."

"A true copy, signed Desfourneaux, certifying this to be an exact copy of the original deposited at the Majorité de la Marine. Le Commis Principal de la Marine, charged with the execution of the order contained in the dispatch of the 28th July, 1821. SCHABRIÉ.

"*L'Orient le 6 9bre, 1821.*"

oners, had disappeared; and, moreover, not a handcuff or shackle of any kind was to be found. It certainly seemed as if the Americans were to be made prisoners. Lieutenant Rodgers, however, was a man of herculean strength and great resolution, and, gallantly seconded by his twelve companions, he forced the prisoners into the lower hold; then "one of the guns was cast loose loaded with grape and canister, and pointed down the hatch, over which a bag filled with shot was suspended, ready to be cut away at a moment's notice. All the muskets and pistols were kept loaded and were placed by the hatch, and two or three men with pikes and battle axes, to be used in case of emergency, stood at the opening."[1] In this perilous condition the little band of captors remained for three nights and two days, and during this time all were constantly on duty. On the third day they made St. Kitts, where they found Captain Truxtun in the *Constellation* anxiously awaiting them.

The *Insurgent* was refitted and taken into the service as a 36-gun frigate, the command of her being given to Captain Alexander Murray, who was the captain of the *Montezuma* when chased by the *Insurgent* on the 20th of November, 1798. Lieutenant Rodgers was promoted to the rank of captain and on the 13th of July, 1799, Lieutenant William Cowper was promoted to the rank of master commandant, the former being appointed to the command of the 20-gun ship *Maryland* and the latter to the *Baltimore*. The *Insurgent's* flag is now in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

The capture of the *Insurgent* and the check given to privateering made the Directory better disposed to negotiate a treaty of peace; and as it assured the United States that our representatives would be received with more respect than had been accorded them in the

[1] Life of Commodore David Porter, by Admiral David D. Porter, p. 23.

past, the 44-gun frigate *United States*, Captain John Barry, was sent to France with Messrs. Ellsworth and Davie as envoys, sailing from Newport on November 3. In the meantime Congress did not relinquish its efforts to build up a permanent navy, and $2,482,953.90 were voted for the service during the year 1800.[1]

On returning to the United States after his imprisonment on the island of Guadeloupe, Lieutenant William Bainbridge was promoted to the rank of master commandant, his commission bearing the date of March

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[1] Since the Secretary of the Navy made his report on the number of ships in the navy, December 24, 1798, the following vessels had been added to the list: The 44-gun frigate *President*, the 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake*, the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, the 36-gun frigate *Insurgent*, the 36-gun frigate *New York*, the 36-gun frigate *Philadelphia*, the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, the 28-gun corvette *Adams*, the 28-gun corvette *Boston*, the 28-gun corvette *General Greene*, the 28-gun corvette *John Adams*, the 24-gun sloop of war *Connecticut*, the 24-gun sloop of war *Trumbull*, the 20-gun sloop of war *Maryland*, the 20-gun sloop of war *Patapsco*, the 18-gun brig *Warren*, the 14-gun brig *Augusta*, the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise* and the 12-gun schooner *Experiment*. The cruisers were divided among the different squadrons in the West Indies as follows: The *Adams*, Captain Richard Valentine Morris; the *John Adams*, Captain George Cross; the *Connecticut*, Captain Moses Tryon; the *Delaware*, Captain Thomas Baker; the *Baltimore*, Master-Commandant William Cowper; the *Eagle*, Master-Commandant Hugh George Campbell; the *Pickering*, Lieutenant Benjamin Hiller; the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant John Shaw; and the *Scammel*, Lieutenant Mark Fernald, at the Guadeloupe station. The *General Greene*, Captain Christopher Raymond Perry; the *Boston*, Captain George Little; the *Patapsco*, Captain Henry Geddes; the *Herald*, Master-Commandant Charles C. Russell; and the *Augusta*, Lieutenant Archibald McElroy, at the St. Domingo station. The *Warren*, Lieutenant T. Newman, and the *Pinckney*, Lieutenant Samuel Heywood, were stationed at the Havana station; the *Portsmouth*, Captain David McNiell, and the *Maryland*, Captain John Rodgers, at the Surinam station. The *Insurgent*, Captain Alexander Murray, sailed with a roving commission—the West Indies, the Western Isles, Madeira, the Canary Islands and the coast of South America as far as Cayenne being suggested. The *Richmond*, Master-Commandant Cyrus Talbot, was ordered to cruise as far as St. Mary's until November 15, when she was to return to Philadelphia. The *United States*, Captain John Barry, had special orders until early in May, 1800; the *Chesapeake*, Captain Samuel Barron, conveyed some specie from Charleston to Philadelphia, after which she cruised between the coast and the West Indies.

29, 1799, and he was placed in command of the 18-gun brig *Norfolk* (one of the vessels which his quick wit had saved), with orders to join the squadron at St. Kitts, commanded by Captain Thomas Truxtun. While chasing a large three-masted schooner just out from Basse Terre, the *Norfolk* lost both her topmasts and was compelled to put into St. Kitts for repairs. Sailing again, she convoyed a fleet of one hundred and nineteen merchantmen, bound for different ports in the United States. When in latitude 34° North, the ships fell in with a French frigate, when Master-Commandant Bainbridge signaled his convoy to disperse while he drew the Frenchman off in chase. The manœuvre succeeded, and having led the enemy far enough away, the *Norfolk* hauled close to the wind and soon ran her pursuer out of sight, rejoining her convoy on the following day at a rendezvous previously agreed upon.

On the 12th of September the *Norfolk* sailed from New York for Cape Français, to join the squadron under Captain Christopher Raymond Perry (father of the hero of the Battle of Lake Erie), who commanded the 28-gun ship *General Greene*, Oliver Hazard Perry at that time serving in her as a midshipman. On the 31st of October, while she was cruising off St. Domingo, with her guns housed and disguised as a merchantman, an armed barge, rowed by sixteen oars and filled with men, came out in chase from the northwest point of the island. Pretending to make great efforts to escape, Master-Commandant Bainbridge allowed the barge to come within musket shot, when the men in it waved their hats as a signal for the brig to heave to, and at the same time they opened a fire of musketry and swivels. But growing suspicious of the *Norfolk* they made for the shore, and then the Americans triced up their ports and fired a broadside. From the piercing shrieks in the barge it was evident that many were hurt. Owing to the calm the *Norfolk* could not follow up the attack, but her boats were sent after the barge,

which was captured on the beach shortly after her men had left it. Two of them were found dead, four were dying in the grass, and others were thought to be badly wounded, as many bloody trails were discovered leading into the woods.

Nine days after this, while off Cape Nicolas Mole, the *Norfolk* captured the French lugger *Republican* and her prize, laden with coffee. On boarding the latter the Americans found the decks strewed with mangled bodies, while five women and six children were weeping over their murdered husbands and fathers. The prize had sailed from a port in the vicinity for Cuba only a short time before, but had scarcely made the offing when she was pursued by a brigand barge filled with armed men, who boarded her, killed all the male passengers, and were plundering the vessel which carried a considerable amount of specie when the *Republican* hove in sight and drove the pirates off. Master-Commandant Bainbridge sent the prize to the United States, and forwarded the unhappy survivors to their destination.

On the 14th of November the *Norfolk* was ordered to cruise on the Cuba station, with the *Warren*, Lieutenant T. Newman, and the *Pinckney*, Lieutenant Samuel Heywood, in company. While engaged in this service she chased a French privateer ashore, where it was destroyed. Learning that another privateer was being fitted out at Havana, the *Norfolk* blockaded that port in spite of the protestations of the Spanish governor, and compelled the commander to dismantle his vessel and discharge his crew. For six months this little squadron kept the sea during the inclement season (with the exception of ten days in port for provisions) and gave convoy to many merchant ships going in and out of the port. For this service Master-Commandant Bainbridge, on the 2d of May, 1800, was promoted to the rank of captain.

Before the close of the year 1799 the *Congress*, Cap-

tain James Sever, and the *Essex*, Captain Edward Preble, convoyed a fleet of merchantmen to Batavia. While off Porto Rico the *Congress* gave chase to a French privateer, which made for a shoal known as the Silver Keys. Charles Morris, who was the first lieutenant of the *Constitution* when that frigate was pursued by a British squadron in 1812, was in the *Congress* at this time as a midshipman, and he describes the chase of the French privateer as follows: "In the eagerness of pursuit the danger of the shoals was probably forgotten, the attention of all being engrossed by the chase, in which we were gaining upon the privateer. While I was watching her movements with others on the forecastle, the gunner, who was at my side, quietly told me to look at the water under and near our bows. My attention being thus directed, rocks were visible, which to appearance were very near the surface. The gunner then told me to go quietly to the captain, who was on the quarter-deck, and tell him what I had seen, but not to mention it to others. This was quickly done. Captain Sever told me to remain by him, and, turning to the officer of the deck, directed him to 'ready about,' and, as soon as ready, to tack; and when about, to keep her off two points, by which to gain her former tack. Then for the first time the captain looked over the side of the ship and saw the dark objects just below the surface of the water which always sends a cold shudder over every seaman. The officers and men also discovered the danger, but the course taken by Captain Sever prevented all danger and confusion. The privateer being a very light craft was able to continue her course and so escaped."

Soon after this the masts and bowsprit of the *Congress* were carried away in a gale, and Fourth-Lieutenant Bosworth, who was endeavoring to lower the maintopmast at the time, was lost with the wreck. This mishap was due to the fact that the rigging had been fitted in the cold climate of the north, so that when the ship

got into the Gulf Stream the shrouds and stays slackened up, in which condition the ship was overtaken by a violent gale. It will be more readily understood how such a disaster could occur when we remember that the masts at that time were usually made of a single stick, while the shrouds and stays, instead of being of steel rope like those of the present day, were made of cordage, which admitted of greater expansion and contraction. The *United States*, Captain John Barry, during her first cruise nearly lost her masts from the same cause. During a heavy gale, when the ship was scudding along at ten knots and at times almost on her beam ends, her rigging became dangerously slack. James Barron, the third lieutenant, volunteered to save the masts, and by getting purchases on every other shroud and swaying all together the difficult task was accomplished. The *Congress* returned to port, but the *Essex* reached her destination, and was the first United States cruiser to carry the American flag eastward of the Cape of Good Hope.

CHAPTER III.

THE WAR WITH FRANCE IN 1800.

EARLY on the morning of February 1, 1800, while cruising on her prescribed grounds, about fifteen miles west of Basse Terre, the *Constellation*, Captain Thomas Truxtun, gave chase to a sail that appeared to the south, standing to the west, which on close inspection proved to be a heavy French frigate. Orders were immediately given to sling the yards with chains and clear the ship for action. Toward noon the wind became light, enabling the stranger to hold his own, and in this relative position the two frigates remained twenty-four hours. At one o'clock on Sunday afternoon, February 2d, the wind freshened, so that by setting every inch of canvas, except the bag reefs which were kept in the topsails in case the enemy attempted to haul on a wind, the *Constellation* gained rapidly. At eight o'clock she came within gunshot, when Captain Truxtun lighted his battle lanterns, hoisted his colors, and stepped to the gangway to hail, but at this moment the stranger opened fire from his stern chasers and quarter-deck guns.

Before the vessels came to close quarters Captain Truxtun with his aids had passed along the divisions on the gun deck and had carefully instructed the men not to fire until he gave the word, and above all not to throw away a single charge of powder or shot, but to aim with deliberation and fire into the enemy's hull. His orders were to load principally with round shot, with now and then a stand of grape added to it. The men of the four divisions were also instructed to load

as fast as possible, but to fire only when it could be done with certain effect, and he particularly enjoined it upon the officers to allow no confusion in loading, and to encourage their men by their example and bearing. When the stranger opened with his stern chasers the *Constellation* did not reply immediately, as Captain Truxtun wished to come to close action at once. Observing that the stranger's shot were doing considerable damage and were causing some restlessness among the American gun crews, Captain Truxtun sent Midshipman Henry Vandyke to the officers commanding the different divisions, to warn them again to refrain from firing. The instructions were faithfully carried out, and the men stood silently by their guns and saw one after another of their shipmates fall to the deck, mutilated or killed by some unseen missile and hurried below to the cockpit, while the ever-present quartermaster in ominous silence sprinkled sand over the little pools of blood, to prevent the deck from becoming slippery.

Finally, having reached a favorable position off the stranger's weather quarter, Captain Truxtun stepped to the quarter-deck taffrail and gave the word to fire. In an instant the different divisions belched forth a torrent of carefully aimed round shot, while the recoil of so many guns at almost the same instant shook the frigate from stem to stern. Judging by the shrieks that could be distinctly heard in the opposing ship after the deafening roar of the broadside had subsided, the effect must have been terrific. The Americans now hastened to reload their guns and fire again as soon as the smoke enabled them to get a fair view of their antagonist. Some of the cannon were handled with such rapidity that they became so heated that it was necessary to dash buckets of water over them.

It seemed to be the enemy's object to avoid an engagement, and to further this end he directed most of his shot at the *Constellation's* rigging, while the Americans, eager for another yard arm action, aimed at the

enemy's hull. The result was that the *Constellation's* rigging soon became seriously damaged, and a large part of her crew was employed in splicing ropes as fast as they were cut, and repairing the sails and spars as much as possible. Toward midnight the Frenchman's fire slackened, and by half past twelve it was silenced. By this time the *Constellation's* rigging and spars were seriously cut up, although her hull was comparatively unhurt. It was now ascertained that the mainmast was unsupported, every stay and shroud having been carried away, so that stoppers were rendered useless. The men were immediately ordered from their guns to meet this new danger; but it was too late, for a minute afterward it went over with a crash, carrying the topmen and Midshipman James C. Jarvis with the wreck. This young man, although warned by a gray-haired seaman of the critical condition of the mast, refused to leave his post, saying that if the mast went they must go with it. Every effort was made to clear the wreck, which was done in an hour; but the Frenchman, having sustained little damage in his rigging, had improved this opportunity to escape, so that by the time the *Constellation* was again under way the stranger was lost in the night, whereupon Captain Truxtun made sail for Jamaica to repair damages.

The Frenchman was known subsequently to have been the 40-gun frigate *Vengeance*, Captain A. M. Pitot. In his official report Captain Pitot neglects to give the particulars of this action; but on the 20th of the following August, or six months afterward, the *Vengeance* was captured by the British frigate *Seine*, Captain David Milne (afterward rear-admiral), when she carried twenty-eight long 18-pounders on the main deck, sixteen long 12-pounders on the quarter-deck and forecastle, and eight short 42-pound carronades, making a total of fifty-two guns with eleven hundred and fifteen English pounds of metal. During the engagement between the *Constellation* and the *Vengeance* the latter had thirty-

six American prisoners aboard, who refused to fight against their flag.

Since her action with the *Insurgent* the *Constellation* had exchanged ten of her long 12-pounders for 24-pound carronades, the first, it is believed, ever used in our navy. Her 24-pounders also had been exchanged for long 18-pounders, so that at the time of this action her armament consisted of twenty-eight long 18-pounders on the main deck, and twelve long 12-pounders and ten short 24-pounders on the quarter-deck and forecastle, in all fifty guns with eight hundred and twenty-six actual pounds of metal. Out of her crew of three hundred and ten she lost fourteen killed and twenty-five wounded, eleven of the wounded afterward dying of their injuries. Captain Pitot does not report his losses, merely saying: "In consequence of the action, I was so much damaged in my rigging that I was forced to put back to the port of Curaçoa, endeavoring to bend sails on the stumps of the masts that still remained, by means of which we were enabled to reach this port on the 18th of the same month." James Howe, one of the American prisoners aboard the *Vengeance*, reported that one hundred and eighty-six round shot struck her hull, and that the slaughter was horrible. Some of her passengers were mustered at quarters. The regular complement of a French 40-gun frigate was three hundred and thirty men, which, for lack of other satisfactory information, will be taken as the *Vengeance's* complement on this occasion, although the passengers mustered at quarters would probably bring the number up to three hundred and fifty. In consequence of the *Constellation* directing her fire at the enemy's hull, the French suffered heavily in men, their loss being fifty killed and one hundred and ten wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Constellation:	50	826	310	14	25	39	Time, 5 hours.
Vengeance:	52	1,115	330	50	110	160	



The Constellation and the Vengeance.

Captain Pitot reports the *Constellation* as a "frégate des États Unis de soixante canons et ayant cinq cent hommes d'équipage. Elle a du vingt-quatre et dix-huit dans sa batterie et du douze sur ses gaillards." It is hardly necessary to show the error of this statement, but it will be remarked that no ship in the United States navy up to 1814 carried more than fifty-five guns, and not even the heaviest frigates as many as five hundred men. That the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, under cover of night, should have handled the *Vengeance* so energetically as to induce Captain Pitot to believe she was a frigate of sixty guns and manned by five hundred men, is the highest possible compliment to Captain Truxtun and his men.

The officers in the *Constellation* who so gallantly conducted this second frigate action of the war were Lieutenants Andrew Sterett, Ambrose Shirley, Samuel B. Brooks and John Herbert Dent. The sailing master was Daniel Eldridge, and the lieutenant of marines was Bartholomew Clinch, while the midshipmen were Philip C. Wederstrandt, Robert Henly, Henry Vandyke, Benjamin Yancey, Samuel Angus, Samuel Woodhouse, John M. Claggett, Robert Warren, James T. Leonard, Benjamin F. Read, Thomas Robinson and James C. Jarvis. For this handsome affair Captain Truxtun received a gold medal from Congress and was placed in command of the 44-gun frigate *President*, while the *Constellation* was given to Captain Alexander Murray, with orders to join the West India squadron under the command of Captain Silas Talbot.[1]

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[1] Captain Pitot's official report of this action is as follows:

"Curaçoa, *Year 8.*

"A. M. Pitot, *captain commanding la Vengeance of the French Republic, to the Minister of the Marine and Colonies:*

"Citizen Minister: I have the honor to send you an account of two actions I have had on the 12th and 13th Pluviose with an American frigate, which attacked us at eight o'clock in the evening in latitude 15° 17′ North and longitude 66° 4′ West of Paris, and fought at first under the English flag and then the American. I am ignorant of its name. The rumor

The squadron under Captain Silas Talbot had been cruising some time on its station off St. Domingo, when it was ascertained that a valuable French letter of marque, the *Sandwich*, was about to sail from Puerto Plata. Fearing that he would not be able to capture her if she once got to sea, Captain Talbot resolved to attempt the difficult feat of cutting her out of the harbor. First-Lieutenant Isaac Hull was sent with one of the *Constitution's* barges to reconnoiter. A few days afterward the American sloop *Sally* was secured, armed and fitted at sea, so that the people on shore could not discover what was going on, and having taken aboard a party of about ninety volunteers she got under way on the following night.

While the *Sally* was still some distance from the harbor a shot flew just ahead of her bow, and a moment later the dark outlines of a frigate loomed up off

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which I heard from the Governor of Curaçoa, and all the information that I have been enabled to procure, lead me to believe that the action took place with the *Constellation*, frigate of the United States, of sixty cannons and having five hundred men as a crew. She had 24- and 18-pounders in her battery and 12-pounders upon her quarter-deck and forecastle.

"You will see, Citizen Minister, what has been my conduct on this occasion; everything showed me that I must avoid an action in the position I was in, and must limit myself to the defensive. I acted in consequence. After having in the first action dismantled my antagonist, I made all sail and continued my course. As to him, he could have attacked us in daylight, but he did not do so, preferring to attack at nightfall, and after having been forcibly repulsed he returned to the charge. The engagement was very exciting. In consequence of the action I was so much damaged in my rigging that I was forced to run before the wind to Curaçoa, working to bend new sails on the stumps of the masts which remained, by means of which we were enabled to reach port on the 18th of the same month. I was very well received here by the governor and the marine commandant. Each of my officers fulfilled his duty with honor, courage and talent, and I must express very great satisfaction with their conduct. I have too much confidence in the justice of the Government to believe that it will be necessary for me to solicit its good offices in their favor. But I can not refuse myself the pleasure of letting you know what brave people I command, the more so as it is the second action in which the great part of them have participated in *la Vengeance* in the space of ten months.

"(Signed) A. M. Pitot."

her starboard quarter. This startling summons to heave to was obeyed, and a few minutes later a British lieutenant boarded the sloop and demanded her papers. Lieutenant Hull explained the nature of the expedition, upon which the British officer expressed disappointment, as his commander also had been waiting for an opportunity to cut out the *Sandwich*. The sloop then resumed her course and soon arrived off the harbor. The *Sandwich* was anchored so as to rake any vessel entering the port with her entire broadside, and



Scene of the naval war in 1800.

a battery on shore gave her additional protection. Lieutenant Hull divided his force: one party to remain in the *Sally* and board the letter of marque, while the other, under Captain Daniel Carmick and Lieutenant William Armory of the marines, was to take the boats for the purpose of landing and spiking the guns in the battery. Having made these dispositions for the attack, the boat party put off, while the *Sally* boldly entered the harbor and stood for the enemy. Lieutenant Hull

and his men concealed themselves in the hold of the *Sally*, leaving only five or six on deck to work the sails. The surprise was complete. The sloop ran alongside the *Sandwich* about twelve o'clock; the men boarded and in a few minutes secured her. The men under Captain Carmick by this time had landed and spiked the guns before effectual resistance could be made. They then returned to their boats and rejoined Lieutenant Hull in the *Sandwich*. The letter of marque was cut from her moorings, her guns scaled and sail was made, and by sunrise both vessels were well out of the harbor. This gallant affair was conducted with much steadiness, and reflects the highest credit on Lieutenant Hull; but seizure was illegal, as Captain Talbot learned on arrival in port, and the *Sandwich* was returned with full compensation for losses.

In July the *Insurgent*, Captain Patrick Fletcher, got to sea with these instructions: "After leaving the Capes of the Chesapeake take an easterly course, keeping rather north of 38° North latitude until you obtain the longitude 68° West, and cruise for a few weeks between longitude 68° and 66° West, and stretch as far south as latitude 31° or 30°." Since her departure on this cruise, July 14, 1800, she has not been heard from. In the following month the *Pickering*, Master-Commandant Benjamin Hillar, got to sea with orders to cruise in the neighborhood of Guadeloupe, and that vessel also has never been heard from. It was thought that she and the *Insurgent* went down in the great equinoctial gale of September, 1800, so that down to this year three vessels of the navy, the *Saratoga*, the *Insurgent* and the *Pickering*, had shared this fate.

During the year 1800 the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*, Lieutenant John Shaw, had a remarkable career. This little vessel and her sister schooner, the *Experiment*, had been constructed with a view of dealing with the small fore-and-aft rigged French privateers which swarmed in the West Indies, and which the

heavy, square-rigged frigates could not so readily capture. These two schooners were armed with twelve old-fashioned 6-pounders, and their complements varied from sixty to eighty-three men and boys.

About the 1st of April, while near the Mona Passage, the *Enterprise* discovered a brig under Spanish colors bearing away to the southeast. Lieutenant Shaw hoisted his flag and gave chase, but as soon as he was within gunshot the brig opened fire. Lieutenant Shaw did not reply immediately, but reserving his ammunition until he had gained a position off the brig's weather quarter he poured in a broadside, and after a sharp action of twenty minutes, during which the stranger kept her Spanish colors flying, the vessels separated by mutual consent, evidently satisfied that a mistake had been made. The Spaniard mounted eighteen guns of heavier caliber than the *Enterprise*. Lieutenant Shaw gained much applause for this spirited affair.

While lying in the port of St. Thomas, repairing damages after this action, the *Enterprise* received an invitation to meet a heavy French lugger, carrying the same number of guns, outside the harbor. The challenge was accepted, but after waiting several days in vain for the Frenchman to appear, and firing taunting shot toward the harbor, the *Enterprise* made for St. Kitts, capturing a small privateer on the way. Having taken aboard fresh provisions at this port, Lieutenant Shaw sailed in May, and when a few days out he captured the letter of marque *Seine*. Although this vessel mounted only four guns and had no more than fifty-four men and boys to man her, she made a desperate resistance, and did not surrender until twenty-four of her crew had been killed or wounded. The *Enterprise* had several men wounded and sustained some injury in her hull and rigging. Two weeks afterward, while cruising to the leeward of Guadeloupe, Lieutenant Shaw captured the 6-gun privateer *Citoyenne*, with fifty-seven men, which did

not surrender until after a stubborn resistance. The French loss was four killed and ten wounded, while the Americans had a marine killed and seven seamen wounded. The prize was sent to St. Kitts.

After refitting at this port the *Enterprise* put to sea again, and while passing between Antigua and Désirade she fell in with the lugger that a month before had challenged her at St. Thomas. Lieutenant Shaw promptly closed, in the expectation of a desperate encounter, but to his surprise the Frenchman surrendered after exchanging a few shot. He had a number of passengers aboard, among whom was a French general. Taking his prize to St. Kitts, Lieutenant Shaw held the general and the master of the lugger to share the fate of two Americans who were in the hands of the enemy at Guadeloupe and were threatened with death, and by this means he obtained their release.

Remaining in port only long enough to replenish his stores, Lieutenant Shaw sailed again, and when to the leeward of Guadeloupe he fell in with the celebrated French privateer brig *l'Agile*, which had done so much harm to American and English commerce, carrying ten guns and seventy-eight men. The vessels passed each other on opposite tacks, the *Enterprise* to leeward. The instant they exchanged broadsides Lieutenant Shaw put his helm down and under cover of the smoke came quickly into the Frenchman's wake, and raked him with four guns before the latter was aware of the manœuvre, making eleven shot in all fired by the Americans. As the *Enterprise* was working easily Lieutenant Shaw allowed her to come around on the other tack, when he ran aboard the Frenchman's weather quarter and carried him by boarding. The comparative ease with which *l'Agile* had been captured at first occasioned some surprise, as her commander was reputed to be one of the most daring and determined privateersmen in the West Indies.

When the Americans boarded, however, they found the commander of *l'Agile* stretched out on the deck, having been struck on the upper part of his forehead early in the action by a cannon shot, which tore away his scalp. He afterward recovered consciousness and survived his injuries. His first lieutenant was killed early in the action by a 6-pound shot which passed directly through his chest, while the second lieutenant was knocked senseless by a round shot, which tore off a part of one ear and much of the skin. The Frenchman's total loss was three killed and nine wounded, while that of the *Enterprise* was three wounded.

Sending this prize to St. Kitts, Lieutenant Shaw continued on his successful cruise, and one night in July he discovered what afterward proved to be a privateer of unusual force. As the stranger seemed to mistake the *Enterprise* for a merchant vessel, he was allowed to approach. As there was no wind the enemy resorted to his sweeps and gradually drew near, but before he came to close quarters, Lieutenant Shaw felt the sea breeze, and setting every inch of canvas gave chase, upon which the Frenchman, alarmed by this unexpected willingness to engage, made off under studding sails, with a view of keeping his distance until he could determine the character and force of his opponent. For this purpose he gradually hauled up and boarded his starboard tacks without hauling down his studding sails, which were set on both sides, as he thought that his brig sailed better on than off the wind than the schooner did. This brought the *Enterprise* in his wake, and as she was an unusually fast sailer she quickly came within musket shot, when an animated fire of small arms was opened. Finding that he outsailed the brig, Lieutenant Shaw drew off on her beam, with the intention of bringing his battery into play, when the enemy gave a sudden yaw and fired his broadside. The American promptly returned the fire, and for twenty minutes maintained it brisk-

ly at pistol shot. Finding that he was getting the worst of it the Frenchman hauled close to the wind, came round on the other tack, and made sail to escape. The *Enterprise* promptly followed, but in coming around she missed stays, and while she was waiting to gather sufficient headway to tack the enemy gained a considerable lead. But it was not long before the swift-sailing *Enterprise* again overhauled him, and soon after she reopened the action at pistol shot. The Frenchman's fore-topmast had been badly wounded early in the action, and six of his crew could be seen aloft endeavoring to secure it. At this moment a flaw struck the brig and carried away the spar and the sailors who were on it. Without waiting to rescue his men, the Frenchman put his helm up and continued in his endeavor to escape, while the *Enterprise*, coming directly upon the wreckage, rounded to and lowering a boat saved the unfortunate men clinging to it. By this delay the enemy again gained a lead, but the *Enterprise* running alongside soon compelled the brig to strike, after an exciting action of forty minutes. The prize, the French privateer *Flambeau*, was considerably heavier than the *Enterprise*, mounting twelve 9-pounders and carrying a crew of one hundred and ten, while the *Enterprise* mounted twelve 6-pounders and was manned by a crew of eighty-three. The Frenchman's loss in killed or wounded was forty, while that of the American's was eight or ten.

While cruising near Antigua, in August, this lucky schooner, after a chase of five hours, captured the privateer *Pauline*, of six guns and forty men, the French consul at Porto Rico being a passenger in her; and in the following month she took the letter of marque *Guadaloupéenne*, carrying seven guns and forty-five men. Aboard of her was found the same French general who was in the lugger captured by the *Enterprise* some weeks before. The *Enterprise* now returned to port, having secured, in a cruise of six

months, eight privateers and recaptured four American merchantmen. The privateers aggregated forty-seven guns and three hundred and eighty-four men. Lieutenant Shaw returned to the United States, and for his brilliant services he was placed in command of the 26-gun corvette *le Berceau*, but failing health compelled him to retire from active command. The *Enterprise* was placed under the orders of Lieutenant Charles Stewart.

Scarcely less fortunate than the *Enterprise* was her sister schooner the *Experiment*, Lieutenant William Maley. On the 1st of January, 1800, while escorting several merchantmen near the island of Gonaive, she was becalmed, and while in this condition ten picaroon barges, each containing forty men, pulling twenty-six oars, with swivels in the bow and quarters, came out to attack her. The vessels of the convoy were widely separated, and there was not a breath of air stirring which would enable them to manœuvre. After a hard fight the mulattoes were driven off, but not until they had captured two of the vessels. Landing their dead and wounded and taking aboard re-enforcements, they returned to the attack. For seven long hours the people in the remaining vessels of the convoy made a desperate defense, and finally drove off the murderous picaroons and saved themselves from a horrible fate. Two of the barges were sunk, while the loss of the picaroons in killed or wounded must have been heavy. The *Experiment* had two men wounded, one of whom was Lieutenant David Porter.

On the 16th of July Lieutenant Charles Stewart was transferred from the command of the *Enterprise* and placed in charge of the *Experiment*, and in a few days he captured the French schooner *Deux Amis*, of eight guns and carrying from forty to fifty men. Soon afterward the *Experiment* was chased by a French 18-gun brig and a three-masted schooner of sixteen guns. Knowing that the force of his vessel would not justify

an action, Lieutenant Stewart manifested great eagerness to escape, hoping thereby to lead the strangers a long chase in which they might become separated, so that he could attack them singly. The *ruse* was successful, and by evening the brig was far in advance of her consort. Under cover of night, Lieutenant Stewart allowed the brig to pass him, and about midnight he ran up on the schooner's weather quarter and poured in a broadside. The consternation produced by this unexpected attack, followed up by a close and rapid fire, in a short time compelled the enemy to surrender. First-Lieutenant David Porter, with a prize crew, was placed in the schooner, the prisoners were secured in the hold, and then both vessels made sail in search of the brig. But that vessel, alarmed by the unlooked-for attack in the rear, had made her escape. The prize was *la Diane*, commanded by M. Perradeau, a privateer carrying fourteen guns and sixty men. Among the prisoners were General Rigand, thirty invalid soldiers, and the first lieutenant of the *Insurgent* during her action with the *Constellation*, who also had been the prize officer of the *Retaliation*.

Before the season closed the *Experiment* had a night action with a strange sail that gives some idea of the hardships and danger encountered by the men who manned these little cruisers. During heavy weather on the night of November 16th, the *Experiment* was put under storm sail, and even with this she was scudding along at nine knots. Shortly before midnight the lookout reported a suspicious sail off the weather bow. As the schooner was heeling over so much that her guns were useless, it was necessary to chock up the carriages until the weather broadside guns became sufficiently depressed to bear on the stranger. By the time this was done the vessels were within gunshot and opened a heavy fire, and in the course of a few minutes the stranger surrendered; but when First-Lieutenant David Porter was sent aboard to take possession, it was found

that the prize was the English privateer *Louisa Bridger*, armed with eight 9-pounders and carrying a crew of about forty-five men. She was badly injured, and had four feet of water in her hold. Her commander was severely wounded early in the action, while the *Experiment* had one man killed and one boy wounded. On discovering the mistake the Americans made every possible reparation.

While the little marine force of the United States was waging a successful war in the West Indies, a spirited action took place off the coast of Spain between an American privateer from Philadelphia called the *Louisa* and several French vessels which came out of Algeciras for the purpose of cutting her off. During the desultory engagement that followed, a lateen-rigged craft filled with men made several desperate attempts to board but was successfully repelled. Before the enemy gave up the fight the commander of the *Louisa* was shot through the shoulder, and while the mate was taking him into his cabin the crew deserted the guns, and, with the exception of the man at the wheel, went below. At this moment the enemy, noticing the confusion, made a final effort to board; and when the mate returned to the deck he found the privateer close alongside, with her forecastle and long bowsprit swarming with men in readiness to spring aboard the *Louisa*. The situation was critical, but the mate came from a city noted for bold and skillful seamen, and, taking in the situation at a glance, the Philadelphian rushed to the forward hatchway and called on his men to come up and take a last shot at the retreating Frenchmen. The *ruse* had the desired effect, and the crew came tumbling up on deck and was immediately sent to quarters. A destructive fire was now opened on the privateer, which swept many of her men from her bowsprit and forecastle, and, supposing that the confusion of a few minutes before was but a stratagem to inveigle her into an attempt to board, she hauled off and re-

joined her discomfited consorts. The *Louisa* sailed into Gibraltar in triumph, and was greeted with enthusiasm by the thousands of people who had witnessed the action from the Rock.

In March, while engaged in towing a merchant ship near Gonaive Island, the *Boston*, Captain George Little, discovered nine picaroon barges pulling from the land to attack him. Running in his guns, Captain Little took every precaution to deceive the marauders as to the character of his ship. On came the barges, pulled by twenty oars and manned by thirty to forty men each, but before they approached as near as could be desired they discovered their mistake and made every exertion to regain the land. The *Boston* then cast off her tow and filled away in pursuit. The chase lasted two hours, during which time the Americans held the picaroons under their guns and exterminated three boat loads of them.

At five o'clock in the morning of the 12th of the following October the *Boston*, being in longitude 51° West, latitude 22° 55′ North, discovered a sail to the south. The breeze was light and varying from east-northeast to southeast. The *Boston* was standing for the stranger, when shortly afterward the lookout reported another sail to the southeast. By 6 A. M. the first sail was seen to be a corvette and the second a schooner. When the first stranger made the *Boston* out as a vessel of war she immediately signaled her consort to make all sail to escape, at the same time setting a good example. Captain Little under a press of sail stood for the schooner, which was making after the corvette on the starboard tack, but the schooner soon proved her superior sailing on this point by passing her consort, and at 10 A. M. was hull down. The *Boston*, however, continued the chase, hoping to overtake the corvette, which was *le Berceau*, commanded by André Senez, who had served as a midshipman under Count D'Estaing during the war of the American Revo-

lution and was considered one of the bravest officers of the French marine. By 11 A. M. the American ship had gained perceptibly, and at noon she was only a league astern. The chase then began to relieve herself by cutting away an anchor and throwing overboard other heavy articles; but in spite of these efforts the Frenchman lost ground, and at 2 P. M. he resorted to the extreme measure of throwing overboard ballast, the second boat and the spare masts. This effort also proved futile, and at 3.30 P. M. the *Boston*, having hoisted her colors, fired two shot, upon which the stranger showed French colors and fired a shot from one of his stern chasers.

Fifteen minutes later Captain Little, being within hailing distance of the corvette, inquired what port she came from, to which her commander replied, "Cayenne." Captain Little then asked, "Where are you going?" and received in reply, "Cruising." He then ordered the Frenchman to strike, but the latter answered with an emphatic "Never!" The *Boston* then ranged up on the enemy's starboard side and began the action at pistol shot. The corvette responded with admirable promptness, and also displayed much more accuracy in her gunnery than either the *Insurgent* or the *Vengeance*.

The story of this remarkable sea fight is best told in the words of one of the officers of the French corvette, Second-Lieutenant Louis Marie Clement, whose official account of the action was discovered by the author in the archives of the Department of the Marine and Colonies in 1886:

"At five o'clock in the morning we noticed a sail ahead of us at a league and three quarters distance. Immediately we signaled it to the schooner to the southeast and kept away a little. A short time after we found out that the vessel we had sighted was a large war vessel. We at once wore around and signaled the schooner to do the same, and a moment later

the stranger imitated our actions. At six o'clock the vessel, which we found to be a frigate, was in our wake, the schooner being a little to windward of us. At half past six a general and decided rallying was signaled to the schooner. At this instant the frigate hauled her wind in chase of the schooner, which immediately came to the wind, close hauled on the starboard tack. We kept away a little more, bringing the wind aft; the frigate hugged the wind, but the schooner gained on her. At eight o'clock the frigate, seeing that she was not overhauling the schooner, kept away toward us. We continued before the wind, which we knew from experience was our best point of sailing. At ten o'clock the schooner had disappeared; the frigate was still chasing us and was gaining a little. By eleven o'clock she had gained still more, and at noon we perceived that she had a decided advantage over us, upon which we relieved our ship by throwing overboard the waist-anchor. The frigate was now about a league astern of us. At half past twelve, their advantage being more obvious, we threw overboard many articles which might impede our progress; and at two o'clock, the frigate having gained considerably on us, we threw overboard what remained of the ballast, also the second cutter and the life-raft, but we still retained two spare masts.

"At half past three o'clock the frigate hoisted the American flag and pennant and fired twice. We at once hoisted French colors and pennant and answered by a single cannon shot. The frigate, at a quarter to four, being within speaking distance, asked us whence we came. A moment later she fired on us, and ranging along our port side within pistol shot the battle began in a most spirited manner on both sides. The musketry was very sharp and well sustained, the only delays being to reload the pieces. The battery also was served with the greatest activity, and the cry of 'Vive la Republique!' was often heard during the battle. At six o'clock our topgallantmasts were seriously wounded,

the shrouds were cut through, and the yards, sails and lower masts were riddled with shot. At five minutes after six o'clock the frigate dropped astern, having her topsail ties cut and the yards on the caps. We boarded our fore and main tacks and came by the wind. The frigate from this moment ceased firing, and we worked without ceasing at repairing damages.

"At half past eight o'clock the frigate again attacked us and we discharged a broadside. From that time the action was renewed with great ferocity at pistol shot. At half past nine o'clock the captain, seeing a favorable opportunity of boarding the frigate, gave the order, and the crew only awaited the chance, and our vessel manœuvred to favor the attempt. The frigate, however, took care not to allow herself to be boarded, and the action continued at pistol range up to eleven o'clock, when the frigate again hauled off to repair damages. We again set our courses, a short time after which our jib boom was carried away and the topmasts followed. At this time our shrouds and backstays were nearly all cut through, and the two spare topmasts had also been cut upon the gallows frame. We therefore found ourselves without the possibility of repairing, but we nevertheless made as much sail as we could. The frigate also was much damaged in her sails and rigging, and she remained out of gunshot but always in sight.

"At five o'clock the next morning nobody had yet left his post and we expected every moment a third attack, when the frigate passed us to the starboard at a great distance, and placed herself to leeward of us at half a league distance. In the course of the morning we saw that she was working at repairs. At half past eleven o'clock our foremast, pierced with shot, fell to starboard, and a short time afterward the mainmast also fell. At two o'clock in the afternoon the frigate, which had now finished repairs, came up to us on the starboard side. Our captain then assembled

the council necessary in such cases. All that were called to the council thought that the dismasted ship—having its battery encumbered with the fallen masts, many shot holes at the water line, which already caused her to make seven inches of water an hour, as well as many other serious damages—could no longer keep up the combat against the frigate without further sacrificing the lives of the men, who were now unable to defend themselves. Besides this, the honorable manner in which they had fought had sufficiently proved how much they had had at heart to preserve to the Republic the sloop which had been confided to their care; but having done all that was possible to prevent its capture they ought to give in to superior forces. It was then unanimously decided that, without making further resistance, the flag should be hauled down. Accordingly it was struck at once, and immediately the frigate sent a boat to take possession. We found her to be the United States frigate *Boston*, Captain George Little. "[Signed] CLEMENT.
SALLERON.

"Four killed and seventeen wounded. Seven hundred cannon shot expended and two thousand one hundred musket shot."

The *Boston* carried twenty-four long 12-pounders and twelve long 9-pounders, or three hundred and sixty-eight actual pounds of metal. Out of a crew of two hundred and thirty she lost four killed and eleven wounded. The *Berceau* carried twenty-two long 8-pounders and two short 12-pounders,[1] or two hundred and sixteen English pounds of metal. Out of a crew of two hundred and twenty she lost four killed and seventeen wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.
Boston:	36	368	230	4	11	15
Berceau:	24	216	220	4	17	21

[1] Official report of Second-Lieutenant Clement.



The Boston capturing the Berceau.

The *Berceau* was in a deplorable condition. She was completely dismasted, the wreck covering her guns and decks, while many shot had taken effect at the water line, causing her to leak dangerously. Captain Little returned to port with his prize in safety. The flag of the *Berceau* is now in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

On the 3d of February, 1801, a treaty of peace, which had been under negotiations for some time, was ratified by the Senate, and on the 23d of the same month the *Herald*, Master-Commandant Charles C. Russell, was dispatched to the West Indies to recall the cruisers on the station. By the terms of the treaty all Government vessels of war captured on either side were to be restored, and under this provision the *Berceau* and the *Vengeance*, a small cruiser taken by the *Trumbull*, were released. The *Insurgent*, the remaining national war vessel taken from the French, had been lost the year before.

This two and a half years of naval war with France had been conducted in a manner that was highly creditable to the little navy of the United States. Eighty-four armed French vessels, nearly all of them privateers, mounting over five hundred guns, had been captured. Of these, eight were released, besides the *Berceau* and the *Vengeance*, as having been illegally seized; one, *le Croyable*, was recaptured, and the remaining vessels were condemned and sold. Nearly all these captures were made by Government cruisers, as few American privateers got to sea during this war. No vessel of the navy was taken by the enemy except the *Retaliation*.

The exports of the country under the protection of this marine force increased from $57,000,000 in 1797, when not a single American cruiser was in commission, to $78,665,528 in 1799, and the revenue on imports rose from $6,000,000 in 1797 to $9,080,932 in 1800.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR WITH TRIPOLI.

THE defeat of John Adams for re-election to the presidency of the United States in 1800 led many to believe that the navy would be reduced to a minimum, if not done away with altogether, for it was under his administration that the Department of the Navy was established and the new navy created. Thomas Jefferson represented the extreme Republican view of government, which was as much opposed to a permanent navy as the country at large objected to a standing army; and as he entered upon his term of office twenty-nine days after the treaty of peace with France was ratified by the Senate, many believed that the young navy was doomed. But such a hold had the gallant little marine force of the United States taken on the people, and so indispensable had it proved itself to the dignity, safety and economical administration of the Government, that the new President, while making radical changes in the precedents established in almost every other department, left the navy practically unimpaired. John Adams himself could not have placed the navy on a peace footing with more regard for its future development than his successor did. At the time when peace was proclaimed the navy numbered thirty-four vessels, of which fifteen, representing four fifths of its strength, were retained in the service, while the remaining vessels, most of which had been merchantmen purchased for the emergency, were sold, and the number of officers was reduced to nine

captains, thirty-six lieutenants and one hundred and fifty midshipmen.[1]

The new administration had been in office only a short time when the necessity of a permanent and adequate navy was shown in a most emphatic manner. As has already been seen, the piratical States of Barbary were not long in discovering that a new nation with a commerce had sprung into existence, and in 1785 two American vessels were seized by them and twenty-one citizens were thrown into slavery. These unfortunate people were ransomed for $59,496 (Spanish milled dollars), and on the payment of tribute depredations in this quarter for a time ceased. But this tame submission only served to stimulate the cupidity of the semibarbarians, and having so easily obtained the inch of tribute they proceeded to extort the ell.

The following extract from an American periodical, published in 1798, throws some light on the humiliating position of the nation before that patriotic sentiment, "Millions for defense; not a penny for tribute!" rang through the halls of Congress and stirred the members to action: "Portsmouth, January 20, 1798. On Thursday morning about sunrise a gun was discharged from the frigate *Crescent* as a signal for getting under way, and at 10 A. M. she cleared the harbor with a fine leading breeze. Our best wishes follow Captain Newman, his officers and men. May they arrive in safety at the place of their destination, and present to the Dey of Algiers one of the finest specimens of elegant naval architecture which was ever borne on the Piscataqua's waters. The *Crescent* is a present from the

[1] The cruisers retained were the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, the 44-gun frigate *President*, the 44-gun frigate *United States*, the 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake*, the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, the 36-gun frigate *New York*, the 36-gun frigate *Philadelphia*, the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, the 28-gun corvette *Adams*, the 28-gun corvette *Boston*, the 28-gun corvette *General Greene*, the 28-gun corvette *John Adams*, the 24-gun sloop of war *George Washington* and the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*.

United States to the Dey as a compensation for delay in not fulfilling our treaty stipulations in proper time. Richard O'Brien, Esq., who was ten years a prisoner at Algiers, took passage in the above frigate, and is to reside at Algiers as Consul-General of the United States to all the Barbary States. The *Crescent* has many valuable presents on board for the Dey, and when she sailed was supposed to be worth at least three hundred thousand dollars. Twenty-six barrels of dollars constituted a part of her cargo. It is worthy of remark that the captain, chief of the officers, and many of the privates of the *Crescent* frigate have been prisoners at Algiers."

But these presents had a far different effect from that intended, for the other States of Barbary beheld with envious eyes the frigate *Crescent*, and, observing the rich and unprotected commerce of the United States in the Mediterranean, they insolently demanded similar gifts and a proportionate tribute. Early in 1800 Jessuf Karamauli, Bashaw of Tripoli, informed the American consul, Mr. Cathcart, "that the Sahibtappa at Tunis had received more than forty thousand dollars from the United States in cash, besides presents, that he had received very little more, and that he had never imagined that the United States meant to put him on an equality with one of the Bey of Tunis' ministers." The Bashaw further showed his arrogance in a letter to the President, dated March 5, 1800. After giving numerous statistics to show that other States received quite as much as himself, he concluded: "But, our sincere friend, we could wish that these your expressions were followed by deeds and not empty words. You will therefore endeavor to satisfy us by a good manner of proceeding. We, on our part, will correspond with you with equal friendship as well as deeds. But if only flattering words are meant, without performance, every one will act as he finds convenient. We beg a speedy answer without neglect of

time, as a delay on your part can not but be prejudicial to your interests."

As the President's "manner of proceeding" was not satisfactory, the Bashaw sent his prime minister to Mr. Cathcart with the notice that war had been declared against the United States, and that the American consul was no longer recognized at Tripoli. On the 14th of May, 1801, the American flagstaff was cut down. The Bey of Tunis also became imperative in his demands, and he complained that some of the planks and oars which had been sent to him were too short. In a letter to the President, April 15, 1801, he asked for forty cannon of different calibers, and in June demanded of the American consul at Tunis, William Eaton, ten thousand stands of arms, saying, "Tell your Government to send them without delay; peace depends on compliance."

At first blush we are surprised to find the leading naval powers of Europe for so many years paying tribute to the piratical States of Barbary, but, turning to the records of Parliament of that period, we come across documents that explain the whole matter. England's aim was to secure a monopoly of the carrying trade and commerce of the world, and in furtherance of this purpose she encouraged the pirates of the Mediterranean, so that, with the aid of her fleet and by paying them a small tribute, her commerce was unmolested while that of weaker maritime nations was constantly harassed. By acknowledging the independence of the United States, England admitted a dangerous competitor to this trade, and in a few years American shipping reached a million tons. The means Great Britain took to cut off this competitor is seen in the following extract from a speech made by Lord Sheffield in Parliament in 1784: "It is not probable that the American States will have a very free trade in the Mediterranean. It will not be to the interest of any of the great maritime powers to protect them from the Barbary States.

If they know their interests, they will not encourage the Americans to be carriers. That the Barbary States are advantageous to maritime powers is certain. If they are suppressed, the little States of Italy would have much more of the carrying trade."

A good illustration of the unscrupulous manner in which England carried out her maritime policy was given in 1793. For several years Portugal had been carrying on an active war against Algiers, and she had confined the depredations of these rovers to the Mediterranean. As this gave protection to American commerce outside of that sea, the British agent at Algiers, without authority from Portugal, brought about a twelve months' truce, and incorporated in the document this extraordinary clause—"that the Portuguese Government should not afford protection to any nation against Algerian cruisers." As this truce was to go into operation immediately, no opportunity was given to warn American or other merchantmen of it, and the robbers were suddenly released and reaped a golden harvest. In the face of the stipulation that Portugal should afford no protection to any other nation against Algerian corsairs, the British ministry disclaimed any intention of injuring American commerce, but their hypocrisy was only too plainly shown in the large number of our merchantmen that were immediately seized and thrown into Mussulman bondage. When David Humphreys, the American commissioner, endeavored to treat with the Dey, the latter, breathing the true spirit of Lord Sheffield's policy, said: "If I were to make peace with every nation, what should I do with my corsairs? My soldiers can not live on their miserable allowance."

Under such fostering care it is not suprising that piracy flourished in the Mediterranean; and as the buccaneers were generally of the Mohammedan faith, their attacks were directed against Christians. For two centuries the northern shores of the Mediterranean

had been devastated by these pests; for, emboldened by their success on the sea, they frequently landed at night and destroyed whole villages, carrying off the men to a horrible servitude to await ransom, while the women were sold in the slave marts of the East. Some of the greatest fortifications along the northern coast of Africa were constructed by Christian slaves in Mussulman bondage, the mole at Algiers representing the labor of thirty thousand Christians.

Piracy was made a state institution at Tripoli, toward the close of the seventeenth century, by the cele-



Algiers.

brated pirate Dragut, who was appointed first governor of the province by Sultan Suleyman II. The Karamauli dynasty of pirates was established in 1713 by Hamet Karamauli, a Moorish chief, his lineal descendant Jessuf reigning at Tripoli in 1800. Piracy was instituted at Algiers in 1516 by the famous Turkish pirate Aruch Barbarossa. On the northern shore of

the Mediterranean to-day can be seen the ruins of watch towers which were built to discover the approach of Barbary pirates and to give the alarm to the inhabitants.

In May, 1800, the *George Washington*, Captain William Bainbridge, was ordered to the Mediterranean to convey the annual tribute to the Dey of Algiers. She reached her destination in September and anchored under the guns of the batteries. After the tribute had been transferred to Mr. O'Brien, the American consul, the Dey requested that the frigate be placed at his disposal, as he wished to send presents to the Sultan at Constantinople. Algiers, like other States of Barbary, was a conquered province under tribute to the Sultan. The Dey and all officials under him, with five thousand Turkish soldiers, were sent from Constantinople to govern the province and to be answerable to the Sultan only for so much tribute annually, which was extorted from the native population and from his American and European tributaries in whatever manner he saw fit. Just before the arrival of the American frigate the Dey had seriously offended the Sublime Porte by making a treaty with France at a time when Turkey and her ally, Great Britain, were carrying on a war against Napoleon Bonaparte in Egypt, and the Dey was anxious to forward, with all possible dispatch, presents to the value of five or six hundred thousand dollars, besides upward of two hundred envoys, to propitiate the wrath of the Sultan.

The American commander declined to have the *George Washington* used in such a service, upon which the Dey put his request in the form of a demand, threatening at the same time to blow the ship out of water if it were not complied with. Mr. O'Brien, whose long acquaintance with Mussulman politics entitled his opinion in these matters to consideration, advised Captain Bainbridge to acquiesce, as refusal would result in a declaration of war. The consul furthermore said that

English, French and Spanish frigates had complied with similar requests. The Dey's argument, "You pay me tribute, by which you become my slaves; I have therefore a right to order you as I may think proper," together with his batteries, compelled obedience, and brought home to the American officers the bitter humiliation of their country's position.

At the moment of sailing another difficulty arose. The Dey insisted that the American flag at the mainmast should give place to the Algerian, but he intimated that the American colors might fly at the foremast, if that harmless concession would tend to soothe his spirited tributaries. This led to another dispute, but as the frigate was under the guns of the batteries and the Mussulmans refused to allow her to move, this last indignity was submitted to. Accordingly, on the 9th of October the *George Washington* set sail with the flag of Algiers over her; but scarcely had she passed beyond the reach of the Moorish batteries, when the Algerian colors were hauled down and once again the Starry Flag floated over the frigate.

The passage to the Bosphorus was particularly disagreeable to the American officers, while the interruptions to the duties of the ship by the frequent devotions of the Mussulmans proved another source of annoyance. Besides other religious ceremonies, they prayed five times a day, and always with their faces toward Mecca. As the ship frequently tacked while they were thus engaged, they were as often obliged to change their positions; and so scrupulous were they that they appointed one of their number to consult the compass at every change in the ship's course, in order to get the right direction. The American tar is not an irreverent fellow as a rule, but his love for a joke usually gets the better of his prudence; and on one occasion when the ship tacked, the seamen at the wheel reversed the points of the compass when the Mussulman

committee of one came to get his spiritual bearings, and so made these devout Turks worship with their backs toward Mecca. When the error was discovered a howl of rage burst from the devotees, and from that time on they stationed several of their keen-eyed brethren behind the helmsmen to see that there was no further tampering with their religious observances.

When the *George Washington* reached the Dardanelles, where two forts commanded the entrance, her



The Dardanelles.

passport was demanded. As she was not provided with one, and came from a country that was unknown in the Orient, Captain Bainbridge resorted to a *ruse de guerre*, not wishing to be delayed several weeks while the regular form of entry could be made out for him. Approaching the usual anchoring ground, he clewed up his courses, let the topsails go, and made every pretense of complying with the rules of the port; but when the ship began firing a salute and the forts returned it, all sail was instantly made under cover of the smoke, and before the Turks were aware of it the frigate was beyond the range of their guns, which, being stationary, were useless when a ship passed their

line of fire. On arrival at Constantinople, the Sublime Porte was officially advised for the first time of a nation in the New World, and he expressed himself as being pleased with the visit; while the American frigate was placed under the "protection" of Capudan Pasha, a brother-in-law of the Sultan and Admiral of the Fleets. The Pasha also gave Captain Bainbridge a firman which entitled him to the special protection of the Sultan in any part of the Turkish Empire. Soon afterward a messenger from the castle came aboard the *George Washington*, bringing with him a lamb and a bunch of flowers, the former an emblem of peace and the latter of welcome. But the Algerian ambassadors were treated with harshness, and were informed that the Dey had just sixty days in which to declare war against France and to send a large sum of money to Constantinople.

The celebrated English traveler Edward Daniel Clarke, who arrived overland at Constantinople from St. Petersburg at the time of Captain Bainbridge's visit, gives the following account of the interest the presence of the United States cruiser aroused in that city: "On the arrival of the American frigate for the first time at Constantinople considerable sensation was excited not only among the Turks but also throughout the whole diplomatic corps stationed at Pera. The ship commanded by Captain Bainbridge came from Algiers, with a letter from the Dey to the Sultan and Capudan Pasha. The presents consisted of tigers and other animals, sent with a view to conciliate the Turkish Government. The messenger from the Dey was ordered on board the Capudan Pasha's ship, who, receiving the letter from the Dey with great rage, first spat and then stamped upon it, telling him to go back to his master and inform him that he would be treated after the same manner whenever the Turkish admiral met him.

"Captain Bainbridge, however, was received with

every mark of attention. The order of the ship and the healthy state of the crew became topics of general conversation in Pera, and the different ministers strove who should first receive him in their palaces. We accompanied him in his long boat to the Black Sea, as he was desirous of hoisting there, for the first time, the American flag; and upon his return we were amused by a very singular entertainment at his table during dinner. Upon the four corners of the table were so many decanters containing fresh water" [the Mussulmans not drinking wine] "from the four quarters of the globe. The nations of Europe, Asia, Africa and America sat down together at the same table, and were regaled with flesh, fruits, bread and other viands, while of every article a sample of each quarter of the globe was presented at the same time."

After landing the envoys and their presents Captain Bainbridge returned to Algiers, arriving at that place on the 21st of January, 1801. This time he took the precaution to anchor beyond reach of the batteries, upon which the Dey expressed great indignation, for it afterward appeared that he wished to send the frigate to Constantinople a second time, as she was the only ship suited for the purpose. The Dey's plan now was to inveigle her under his guns on any pretext, seize her, enslave all her officers and men, and then declare war against his unmannerly tributaries. Having brought them to a better frame of mind with threats of torturing or butchering his several hundred prisoners, he would grant peace only on promises of better behavior in the future, and on payment of a heavy ransom, which would reimburse him for the fine the Sultan had just imposed upon him, and leave a handsome balance besides.

Having marked out his programme for the chastisement of the "Christian dogs" of the New World, he proceeded to carry it out. All the subterfuge and craft known to Oriental diplomacy were brought into play.

Threats and persuasion, menace and flattery, and an adroit manipulation of falsehood, spread out their network of deceit and trickery to entangle the victim. But the clear-headed commander of the *George Washington* was not to be duped by such methods. His prudence in anchoring his ship out of gunshot interrupted the programme, and nothing could induce him to change his determination.

Before he sailed for Constantinople Captain Bainbridge had borrowed some old cannon of the Algerians to be used as ballast. He now wished to return them, and engaged lighters for that purpose; but when the Dey heard of it he forbade the men to undertake the work unless the frigate came under the guns of his batteries, and at the same time threatened to declare war unless the cannon were immediately returned, on the charge that the frigate had borrowed cannon and would not return them. Captain Bainbridge, however, managed to have the cannon landed in spite of the obstacles the Dey threw in his way, and said "the Dey had forgotten the oath he swore not to make any further demands after the first voyage was performed. After such a disregard of his solemn declaration he could not doubt his disposition to capture the frigate, and enslave the officers and crew, if she were again in his power."

At the urgent solicitation of the American consul, Captain Bainbridge, being assured of his personal safety, landed and waited upon the Dey in his council chamber. The despot received him with scowls, and, soon bursting forth into an ungovernable rage, threatened him with torture and captivity; and as he was surrounded by fifty of his janizaries fully armed, and having before them a representative of an unknown nation in the far-off New World, there was little doubt that the Dey would have made good his threat; but at this critical moment Captain Bainbridge thought of the firman that Capudan Pasha had given to him, and

showed it to the enraged potentate. In an instant the fury of the tyrant was changed into cringing deference to the unarmed man before him. The next morning the flagstaff of the French consulate was cut down and war was declared against that country, while about four hundred Venetians, Maltese and Sicilian prisoners, who had been captured while under the protection of British passports, were liberated.

Smarting under the insults that had been heaped upon his flag, Captain Bainbridge made sail for the United States. Before leaving Algiers he took aboard several French families, including that of Dubois de Trainville, the French consul, and that of the French governor of La Caille. Failing of an opportunity to wreak his rage on the Americans or on the Maltese, Venetians or Sicilians, the Dey now turned on the



Alicante.

French who happened to be in his realm ; and as he had been compelled by the Sultan to declare war against that country, he threatened to put every man, woman and child of them in irons if found in Algiers after forty-eight hours. As the Dey well knew, there

was no vessel in port that could take them away, and they were doomed to the horrors of Mussulman slavery. But Captain Bainbridge offered to take them aboard the *George Washington*, although the United States and France at that time were at war. Such was the haste of the debarkations that no preparation for the unexpected passengers could be made, but the American officers gave up their cabins to the refugees and did everything in their power to alleviate their distress. On the 8th of May they were landed at Alicante, and they bade adieu to their "kind and generous friend with hearts full of gratitude." Napoleon Bonaparte, who at that time was First Consul of France, ordered that "his acknowledgments and thanks be tendered to Captain Bainbridge for the important services he had rendered the Republic, with assurances that such kind offices would be always remembered and reciprocated with pleasure whenever an occasion offered."

The *George Washington* now stood down to the Straits of Gibraltar, and in a few days was spreading her sails on the broad Atlantic for the United States, where she arrived early in the summer of 1801, bringing news of the outrages that had been perpetrated on her and on the American flag.

CHAPTER V.

THE WAR IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

BEFORE news of the declaration of war by the Bashaw of Tripoli reached the United States the Government had intimations of the probability of such a measure being taken, and on the 20th of May, 1801, the Secretary of the Navy ordered a squadron of observation, under the command of Captain Richard Dale, to the Mediterranean. The squadron consisted of the 44-gun frigate *President* (flagship), Captain James Barron; the 36-gun frigate *Philadelphia*, Captain Samuel Barron; the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, Captain William Bainbridge (this ship sailing after the others), and the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Andrew Sterett. Captain Dale was instructed to appear off the ports of Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, and if possible maintain peace with those regencies by this showing of force and by promises of presents; but if any of them had declared war by the time he arrived he was to act on his own judgment. In any case the ships were not to remain in the Mediterranean after the 1st of December, as navigation in that sea was considered too hazardous in winter.

The squadron arrived at Gibraltar on the 1st of July, where it found two Tripolitan corsairs, one a ship of twenty-six guns, 9- and 6-pounders, with two hundred and sixty men; and the other a brig of sixteen guns and one hundred and sixty men, under the command of an admiral, a renegade Scotchman named Lisle. As the circumstances of these rovers being stationed at the Straits of Gibraltar was suspicious, the *Philadelphia*

was ordered to watch them and to prevent their getting to sea. This was effectually done, and the admiral, despairing of making his escape, dismantled his ships and sent his men secretly across the Straits in boats, and they made their way overland to Tripoli. The despots of the several States of Barbary united in complaining of the blockade as being contrary to custom, and the Dey of Algiers insolently demanded passports for the crew of the Tripolitan corsair, which Captain Dale promptly refused to give.

The arrival of this first American squadron in the Mediterranean aroused much interest in the several ports at which the ships stopped, and many complimentary notices of them appeared in the newspapers. When the *Essex*, Captain William Bainbridge, arrived in the Roads of Barcelona, early in August, she was received with every courtesy by the Spanish officers. An incident happened in this port, however, which showed that even among friends a frigate must be ready to defend the honor of its flag. Returning from a visit to the city in his gig one night Captain Bainbridge was grossly insulted by the commander of a Spanish xebec which was anchored in the harbor as



Scene of the naval operations in the Mediterranean.

a guard boat. In vulgar and abusive language the Spaniard ordered the gig to come alongside, and, as no attention was paid to the insult, several musket shots

were fired. Supposing that some mistake had been made, Captain Bainbridge ran alongside the xebec and explained who he was, but, not satisfied with this, the commander of the guard boat insisted on his coming aboard. Captain Bainbridge replied that, as the commander of an American frigate, he considered it beneath his dignity to comply with such an impudent request, and ordering his men to shove off, he pulled for the *Essex* in spite of the Spaniard's repeated threats of firing on him.

On the following night some of the American lieutenants returning from the shore were insulted in the same manner. First-Lieutenant Stephen Decatur was one of the number, and the next morning he went aboard the xebec and asked for her commander, but finding that he was ashore he said, "Well, then, tell him that Lieutenant Decatur, of the frigate *Essex*, pronounces him a cowardly scoundrel, and that when they meet on shore he will cut his ears off." The captain-general of the port, hearing of the threat, was much disturbed, as the commander of the xebec was a man with influential connections, and he begged Captain Bainbridge to avert the duel by keeping all the American officers confined to the *Essex* so long as they were in that port, while on his part he promised that the commander of the xebec would be kept out of harm's way. Captain Bainbridge replied that not for a moment would he consider the proposition; that he knew the American officers to be gentlemen, and if the commander of the xebec did not know how to treat them as such he must take the consequences. This spirited answer brought the captain-general to terms, and the obnoxious commander of the xebec was severely censured and made ample apology. This affair reached the ears of the King at Madrid, who immediately ordered the officials of every Spanish seaport to "treat all officers of the United States with courtesy and respect, and more particularly those attached to

the United States frigate *Essex*." This order was faithfully carried out, and our officers were not again annoyed by the impertinence of petty officials.

While the *Essex* called at the ports of Marseilles, Barcelona and Alicante to collect and convoy a fleet of American merchantmen through the Straits of Gibraltar, the *President* and the *Enterprise* made sail for Algiers. The appearance of this force had a more soothing effect on the Dey's resentment than a dozen *George Washingtons* laden with presents, and he hastily retracted his hostile utterances of a few months before and assured Captain Dale of his friendship for the United States.

In the meantime the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Andrew Sterett, was sent to Malta, and while cruising off that island, August 1, she fell in with the enemy's war polacre *Tripoli* of fourteen guns and eighty men. An action began within pistol shot, and was maintained with great obstinacy for three hours. In the course of the battle the Tripolitans surrendered three times, but when the Americans sent a boat to take possession the Turks twice reopened fire and rehoisted their colors. Exasperated by their treachery, Lieutenant Sterett determined to sink them, but the Turkish commander finally appeared at the gangway, and, casting his flag into the sea, bowed his head to the deck and begged for quarter. Thereupon Lieutenant David Porter was again sent aboard to secure the prize, and this time no difficulty was experienced. In this action the *Enterprise* did not lose a man, and she received no material damage in her hull or rigging; but the *Tripoli* was severely handled, her mizzenmast going by the board shortly after she struck. Out of her crew of eighty she lost twenty killed, while her commander, Mahomet Sous, her first officer and twenty-eight men were wounded.

According to his instructions, Lieutenant Sterett threw all the enemy's guns, arms and ammunition over-

board, and completely dismantling the polacre of everything save a sail and a spar he ordered her to make for the nearest port. For this handsome affair Congress voted Lieutenant Sterett a sword and promoted him to the rank of master-commandant, and gave one month's pay to each of the officers, the sea lieutenants being David Porter and Richard H. L. Lawson, while E. S. Lane was lieutenant of the marines.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Enterprise:	12	94	0	0	0	Time 3 hours.
Tripoli:	14	80	20	30	50	

The result of this first rencontre between the Americans and the Tripolitans was to render the latter extremely cautious in venturing on the sea when an American cruiser was known to be around. On regaining port, the survivors of this action circulated such accounts of the ferocity and prowess of the Americans that it caused almost a panic among the superstitious seafaring classes at Tripoli, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they could be induced to go to sea. This fear was increased by wild and exaggerated accounts of the personality of the strange men from the New World. They were represented as being possessed of terrible powers and superhuman influences, stories which were readily believed by the imaginative Orientals. The commander of the *Tripoli* was severely punished, in spite of the evidences of his bravery as shown in his many wounds. He was placed on a donkey, and having been paraded through the streets of Tripoli he received the bastinado.

After overawing the Dey of Algiers, the *President* appeared off Tripoli on the 24th of August, and on the 30th she brought to a Greek ship that was endeavoring to run the blockade. On board were found thirty-five Tripolitans, who were detained as prisoners, and after considerable haggling over the terms they were ex-

changed for six Americans. Remaining eighteen days before this city, Captain Dale made for Gibraltar, stopping at several European ports on the way.

While entering Port Mahon the *President* met with an accident that would have resulted in the loss of the ship had it not been for her superior construction. While standing into the Roads with about six knots headway she struck a rock, and rolling heavily, settled off toward the passage and again floated. Captain Dale immediately came on deck, and with great skill and coolness carried his ship through the narrow channel and brought her to the wind until the extent of the damage could be ascertained. As the pumps showed that she was not leaking seriously, it was decided not to run off the land, but a heavy gale coming on during the night Captain Dale made for Toulon, where he arrived in safety. On examining the ship's bottom it was found that a large piece of the stem had been literally twisted off, while the keel for several feet was shattered. Nothing prevented the ship from sinking but the skillful manner in which she had been constructed.

In December the *President* and the *Enterprise* returned to the United States, leaving the *Philadelphia* and the *Essex* on the station. During the winter of 1801–1802 these frigates appeared off Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, and so vigilant were their commanders, and so excellent was the disposition of their forces, that not a single American merchantman was captured. Captain Dale was superseded in the command of the Mediterranean squadron by Captain Thomas Truxtun, but the question of allowing the latter a captain for his flagship arose and he resigned from the service, and Captain Richard Valentine Morris was appointed in his place. Up to this time much difficulty had been experienced from enlisting the men for one year only. The limit was now increased to two years.

Captain Morris arrived at Gibraltar on the 25th

of May, 1802, and in the course of a few months the following vessels arrived on the scene of action: The 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake* (flagship), Lieutenant Isaac Chauncey; the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, Captain Alexander Murray; the 36-gun frigate *New York*, Captain James Barron; the 28-gun corvette *Adams*, Captain Hugh George Campbell; the 28-gun corvette *John Adams*, Captain John Rodgers; and the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*, Master-Commandant Andrew Sterett. The 28-gun corvette *Boston* was ordered to join this squadron after landing Robert R. Livingston, the American minister to France, at L'Orient; but her eccentric commander, Captain Daniel McNiell, took pains not to fall in with his superior officer, and after cruising some time in the Mediterranean he brought the *Boston* back to the United States. Richard Somers at that time was her first lieutenant, and Melanchthon Taylor Woolsey, afterward captain, was a master's mate in her. It was said of Captain McNiell that he sailed from Toulon leaving three of his officers on shore, and in order that he might keep his complement full he carried with him three French officers who were dining aboard the *Boston* at the time. They were carried over to the African coast and returned in a fishing boat, but it was many months before the American officers were able to rejoin their ship. On another occasion Captain McNiell, while at Messina, had a number of musicians aboard belonging to one of the regiments quartered at that port, whom he carried to the United States against their will. Several of them were returning in the *Chesapeake* when that ship was attacked by the *Leopard* in 1807. During the War of 1812 Captain McNiell performed some gallant exploits in a revenue cutter, but after his eccentric career in the Mediterranean he was not again connected with the navy, although he was ever considered one of the bravest and most skillful officers of his day.

So sanguine was the Government that this squad-

ron would bring the Bashaw to terms, that Mr. Cathcart, who had been the American consul at Tripoli, was sent to negotiate a treaty of peace. But formidable as this naval force was, it was not fitted either for blockade duty or for bombarding a city fortified as Tripoli was. It contained no long gun heavier than an 18-pounder, and the *Enterprise* was the only vessel in the squadron fitted for the peculiar and difficult navigation of the northern coast of Africa. Little could be done, therefore, toward bringing the Bashaw of Tripoli to terms, but the timely appearance of this strong force not only protected American shipping but so overawed the Emperor of Morocco, the Dey of Algiers and the Bey of Tunis that they hastily retracted their hostile expressions.

While cruising three or four leagues off the port of Tripoli in company with a Swedish frigate, the *Constellation* discovered seventeen gunboats stealing along the shore, which had left Tripoli the night before to assist in running in an American prize that was expected from Tunis. Captain Alexander Murray immediately gave chase and opened a brisk fire, compelling nine of the gunboats to run close in shore, where they were protected in little bays and inlets; at the same time a large body of cavalry came down to the shore to aid in their defense. Finding it impossible to reach them, Captain Murray returned to his station off the port. The gunboats were seriously injured by the *Constellation's* fire, and the cavalry suffered severely, one officer of high rank being reported killed. The *Constellation* received some slight damage in her rigging. On the 30th of January, 1803, Captain Morris sailed from Malta for Tripoli with the *Chesapeake*, the *New York*, the *John Adams* and the *Enterprise*, but before he had cleared Malta a gale began and blew with extreme violence for eleven days, which rendered it impossible to approach the coast.

While Captain Morris was detained in Malta by

adverse winds an incident took place which will give some idea of the difficulties with which the officers of the navy in its early days had to contend. It was the fashion in British society at this time to speak contemptuously of anything that pertained to the United States, and especially of the navy; and one evening, while Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge and some of his messmates were in the lobby of a theater, a young British officer, the secretary of Sir Alexander Ball, the governor of the island, said with the intention of being overheard by the Americans, "Those Yankees will never stand the smell of powder," and followed up the slander by rudely brushing against Midshipman Bainbridge. The latter promptly knocked the offensive officer down, and a challenge followed. Lieutenant Stephen Decatur acted as second to young Bainbridge, and selected pistols at four paces. The governor's secretary was an expert duelist, but his second objected to the distance, remarking, "This looks like murder, sir"; to which Decatur replied: "No, sir, this looks like death; your friend is a professed duelist; mine is wholly inexperienced." And on this footing the two men faced each other. Decatur gave the warning, "Take aim!" and at the word "Fire!" Bainbridge discharged his weapon and the ball passed through the secretary's hat, while the latter missed his aim entirely. The men were again placed face to face, and this time the Englishman fell, mortally wounded.

Hearing from William Eaton, the American consul at Tunis, that "matters were not quite peaceable in that quarter," Captain Morris changed his course for that place, and by this showing of force undoubtedly prevented the Bey from beginning hostilities. Sailing again on the 11th of March, the squadron appeared off Algiers. The Dey quickly changed his belligerent attitude, expressed satisfaction with the existing treaty, and became indignant when it was intimated that the Americans had been led to believe to the contrary.

Arriving at Gibraltar on the 23d of March, Captain Morris shifted his broad pennant to the *New York*, and the *Chesapeake* sailed for the United States by order of the Navy Department.

On the 10th of April, while the *New York*, the *John Adams* and the *Enterprise* were on their way from Gibraltar to Malta, an explosion took place near the cockpit of the flagship, just as the music was beating to grog, and the lower part of the ship immediately became filled with smoke. At this moment, Lieutenant Isaac Chauncey, who was acting captain, was passing the drummer and immediately ordered him to beat to quarters, and soon the well-disciplined crew was under perfect control, ready for any emergency. As the explosion had occurred near the magazine, it was feared that the ship might blow up at any instant, so Captain Morris gave the command to hoist out the boats; but the men, mistaking the meaning of the order, rushed to the jib-boom, bowsprit, spritsail yardarm, and to any place that was as far as possible from the dreaded magazine. To add to the confusion, when a quartermaster was ordered to hoist the signal "A fire on board!" in his haste he sent up the signal "A mutiny on board!" Thereupon the *John Adams* and the *Enterprise* ranged up under the *New York's* stern with their crews at quarters and guns trained, and observing the smoke and excitement aboard the flagship awaited only the word to fire; but they were prevented from doing so by a timely explanation from the flagship. Lieutenant Chauncey then rallied some of the men, and, coolly remarking that they might as well be blown through three decks as one, led the way to the magazine. The passages were filled with smoke, and a single spark would have blown the entire ship's company to eternity. Lieutenant Chauncey was seconded by Lieutenant David Porter, who with some other officers descended through the wardroom, and by means of wet blankets and a

liberal use of water they extinguished the flames. The explosion was thought to have originated from a candle which the gunner took into the storeroom that led from the cockpit, where a quantity of marine cartridges and loose powder were stored. Nineteen officers and men were injured by the explosion, of whom fourteen subsequently died. The sentinel at the magazine passage was blown through to the filling-room door, while the two doors leading to the magazine passages were forced open, and nearly all the adjoining bulkheads were blown down.

Arriving off Tripoli, the *John Adams*, Captain John Rodgers, on the 5th of May intercepted the *Meshouda*, one of the Tripolitan cruisers that had been blockaded at Gibraltar, and which was now returning to Tripoli under an assumed character. In order to deceive the Americans she had been sold to the Emperor of Morocco, who had sent her to Tunis, and having loaded at that port with grain she made sail for Tripoli.

Captain Morris now determined to assemble his entire force before Tripoli, with a view of intimidating the Bashaw and negotiating a favorable treaty, and by the end of May all the vessels were collected off that port. On the 8th of June, having been assured of his personal safety, he landed and had an interview with the Bashaw's ministers, but their terms were so extravagant that negotiations were abruptly broken off.

While assembled before the town the squadron chased eleven lateen-rigged coasters, laden with wheat, into the harbor of Old Tripoli, where the enemy, being in great need of grain, made every preparation to secure them, and a large body of troops came down from Tripoli to assist in their defense. The coasters were hauled up high and dry on the shore near a stone building, and breastworks from fifteen to eighteen feet high were hastily erected with the bags of wheat. During the night Lieutenant David Porter made a reconnoissance, and on the following morning he and Lieutenant

James Lawrence, at the head of a strong boat party, pulled inshore, and notwithstanding a heavy fire routed the enemy; and after firing the coasters they returned to the ships with the loss of about fifteen killed or wounded, among the latter being Lieutenant Porter, who was twice injured. John Downes was one of the midshipmen in this spirited affair. So close were they to the enemy that five or six of the Tripolitans stepped from behind the breastworks and threw handfuls of pebbles and sand at the Americans, hoping that the wind would blow it in their faces and blind them—a species of warfare often resorted to in that country, and very effective in a desert. The Tripolitans succeeded in extinguishing the flames before serious damage was done, but their loss was severe. Several of their horses were cut in two by cannon balls, and their riders fell dead. On the 28th of May an attack was made on the gunboats, but owing to the direction of the wind little was accomplished.

On the 10th of June Captain Morris returned to Malta to arrange for the bombardment of Tripoli, leaving the *John Adams*, the *Adams* and the *Enterprise*, the last now commanded by Lieutenant Isaac Hull, to watch the port. On the night of June 21 some movements on the part of the enemy led the senior officer of this squadron, Captain John Rodgers, to believe that an effort would be made to run the blockade that night. In order that he might more effectually intercept any craft which should make this attempt Captain Rodgers stationed the *Adams*, Captain Hugh George Campbell, to the west, and the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Isaac Hull, to the east, while the *John Adams* cruised off the port between the two. Early on the following morning the signal "An enemy!" was flying from the *Enterprise*. The frigate immediately ran down to her and discovered that a ship "mounting twenty-two guns, the largest cruiser belonging to Tripoli," had run into a deep, narrow bay, about six

leagues east of Tripoli, and was favorably anchored for resisting an attack. This corsair had been cornered by the little *Enterprise*, which, on discovering the enemy at daylight, boldly ran down and compelled him to seek refuge.

Soon nine gunboats were seen sweeping along the shore to aid in the defense, while a large body of soldiers were collected on shore. The *John Adams* and the *Enterprise* now stood close into the bay, and at 8.53 A. M. opened fire. After a cannonading of forty-five minutes the Turks were observed hastily abandoning their ship, a number of them jumping overboard, and shortly afterward the cruiser blew up. The explosion "burst the hull to pieces, and forced the main and mizzen masts one hundred and fifty feet perpendicularly into the air, with all the yards, shrouds, stays etc., belonging to them."[1] Captain Rodgers then endeavored to cut off the nine gunboats, but owing to numerous shoals he was compelled to keep too far seaward to accomplish his purpose.

The difficulty of conducting an effective warfare in the shoal waters off the coast of Tripoli with ships of heavy draft induced Congress to pass a law, February 28, 1803, authorizing the construction of the brigs *Siren* and *Argus*, mounting sixteen 24-pound carronades and two long 12-pounders, and the schooners *Nautilus* and *Vixen*, mounting twelve 18-pound carronades and two long guns. These vessels, commanded by Lieutenant Charles Stewart, Lieutenant Stephen Decatur, Lieutenant Richard Somers and Lieutenant John Smith, respectively, sailed as soon as they could be prepared for sea, and arrived in the Mediterranean by the close of 1803. Captain Morris was ordered back to the United States, where his conduct was inquired into by Congress, and as it did not prove satisfactory he was dismissed from the service, although it was

[1] Official report of Captain Rodgers.

thought that his dismissal was largely due to political influences. He was succeeded by Captain Edward Preble, who arrived at Gibraltar in the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, on September 12.



Gibraltar.

When Captain Preble assumed command of the squadron in the Mediterranean he was little known to the officers and men. He came from New Hampshire, while the other officers generally hailed from the Middle and Southern States. He was a man of high temper and a disciplinarian of the strictest type, and at first the officers, especially the younger men, conceived a strong dislike for him. But they mistook their man, and shortly after his arrival in the Mediterranean an incident happened which won for him the respect and loyalty of the entire squadron. One dark night, while the flagship was in the Straits of Gibraltar, a large ship suddenly loomed up off the beam, and was soon made out to be a heavy man-of-war. After exchanging several hails, in which neither commander would

reveal the name of his ship, but insisted on knowing the name of the other, Captain Preble hailed rather sharply:

"I now hail you for the last time; if you do not answer I'll fire a shot into you."

To which the stranger replied: "If you do, I'll return a broadside."

"I should like to catch you at that! I now hail for an answer. What ship is that?"

"This is his Britannic Majesty's 84-gun ship of the line *Donegal*, Sir Richard Strachan. Send a boat on board."

To this Captain Preble replied: "This is the United States 44-gun ship *Constitution*, Captain Edward Preble, and I'll be d——d if I send a boat on board any ship! Blow your matches, boys!"

As Captain Preble doubted the truth of the stranger's hail, he told him that he would lie alongside him until the morning revealed his identity; upon which the stranger sent a boat aboard the *Constitution* to explain that it was the English 32-gun frigate *Maidstone*, and that the American had got alongside of her so unexpectedly that they gave a fictitious name in order to gain time for getting to quarters.

Arriving at Gibraltar after his cruise in the upper Mediterranean Captain Bainbridge was informed that two Tripolitan vessels were cruising in the vicinity of Cape Gata, and he immediately made sail for the place. On the night of August 26 a ship and a brig were discovered running under easy canvas, and after coming up with them and repeatedly hailing, Captain Bainbridge learned that the ship was a cruiser from Barbary. The Moorish commander was finally made to understand that he must send a boat aboard with his ship's papers, from which Captain Bainbridge discovered that she was a cruiser belonging to the Emperor of Morocco, called the *Meshboha*, commanded by Ibraham Lubarez, mounting twenty-two guns and carrying

one hundred men. Believing the *Philadelphia* to be an English frigate, the Moor remarked that the brig in company was an American which had sailed under his protection for several days. The small sail the brig was under induced Captain Bainbridge to suspect that she had been captured, and Lieutenant Cox was sent aboard to discover if she had prisoners. When that officer reached the brig the Moors in charge would not allow him to board, which only increased the suspicions of foul play, and an armed party was immediately ordered to enforce a search.

Confined in the hold were found Richard Bowen and seven men of the American brig *Celia* of Boston, owned by Amasa Thayer. The officers and crew of the *Meshboha* were immediately made prisoners and ordered on board the *Philadelphia*. This took so much time that during the night the brig was lost sight of, and it was not until the following afternoon that she was discovered rounding Cape Gata from the east and standing close inshore. Owing to the lightness of the wind it was midnight before she was recaptured.

In the meantime the commander of the *Meshboha* was asked on what authority he had seized the *Celia*. He answered that he had no authority, but that when he left Tangiers there was serious trouble between the Emperor and the American consul, and in anticipation of an immediate declaration of war he had seized the brig. Captain Bainbridge replied that in such case he had no right to use the American consul's passport, which permitted him to cruise unmolested by American ships of war ; and still suspecting that the seizure had been made with the sanction of the Emperor of Morocco, Captain Bainbridge informed the commander of the *Meshboha* that the capture was an act of piracy, and that he was under the necessity of hanging him at the yardarm. This threat had the desired effect. The Moor begged for a stay of proceedings, hastily unbuttoned

several waistcoats, and from the inside pocket of the fifth drew out the secret document. It was not signed by the Emperor of Morocco, however, but by his subordinate, the Governor of Tangiers. Captain Bainbridge now made sail for Cape St. Vincent in search of a Moorish ship of thirty guns, but not falling in with her he returned to Gibraltar with his prizes (where he was joined by David Porter as first lieutenant) and reported the affair to his superior.

Captain Preble took prompt and decisive measures, and on the 6th of October the *Constitution*, the *New York*, the *John Adams* and the *Nautilus* appeared off Tangiers. Although Captain John Rodgers was the senior officer on this station, and his authority, strictly speaking, had ceased, he generously consented to accompany Captain Preble to Tangiers, leaving him his power to act as negotiator and commander in chief. The Emperor promptly disavowed the act of his governor, and as an earnest of his good faith signed anew the treaty of 1786, and deprived the governor of his commission, confiscated his estates and publicly proclaimed the commander of the *Meshboha* a disgraced officer. A salute of twenty-one guns was given to the American squadron, and a present of ten bullocks, with sheep and fowls was sent aboard the ship; and to make the reparation greater, an American ship that had been detained at Mogador was released. On the 8th of October the Emperor, with his court and army, reviewed the American squadron and exchanged salutes. Notwithstanding this ample apology, it was generally thought at the time that the Emperor had authorized these captures and had merely shifted the responsibility on his subordinates. The *Meshboha* was returned, however, and the affair was amicably dismissed. Congress voted the captors of this ship an appropriation in lieu of prize money.

Soon afterward the *Philadelphia*, Captain William Bainbridge, was detailed to assist the 12-gun schooner

Vixen, Lieutenant John Smith, in blockading the port of Tripoli. After arriving off that harbor Captain Bainbridge was informed by a Neapolitan that a Tripolitan corsair had just sailed on a cruise. This information induced him to dispatch the *Vixen* in the direction the corsair was supposed to have taken, so that the *Philadelphia* was left alone before Tripoli. On the 29th of October, while on this tedious duty, the frigate was driven from her station by a strong westerly wind, and as she was returning to her station, on the morning of the 31st, she discovered a Tripolitan vessel, probably the corsair the *Vixen* had gone in search of, endeavoring to run into the port. The *Philadelphia* immediately made sail in chase, and by 11 A. M. had opened fire with her bow guns, but owing to numerous shoals and sunken rocks she was much embarrassed in her movements and did not gain so rapidly as could be desired. An extensive reef called Kalinsa, not down on the charts of that day, ran some miles eastward of Tripoli, parallel to the coast. As the chase undoubtedly well knew, there was an abundance of water between the reef and the mainland, and many openings led out to sea where there were six and seven fathoms; but all this was unknown to Captain Bainbridge and his officers. These reefs and channels afforded the enemy every facility in evading a blockading force, for knowing all the landmarks they could sail through the various channels in safety, and the Tripolitan probably steered among these reefs hoping the frigate would follow and run aground. In making for the chase the *Philadelphia* passed to the east of the most easterly reef and then entered the inner channel. The lead was constantly kept going and showed from seven to ten fathoms, and when the water shoaled the frigate's speed was checked until the lead again showed deepening water. In this manner she continued the chase before the wind, until, Tripoli being only three miles distant, it was seen that the enemy would gain

the harbor, when the courses were hauled up and the helm was put aport. But it was some time before the *Philadelphia* lost her headway, and when the lead showed eight fathoms she was still making eight knots. The next lead showed seven fathoms, and fifteen seconds later the cry "Six half!" startled every man in the ship, for she was rushing through the water at a dangerous rate. The helm was instantly ordered hard aport, and the yards were braced up, rapidly bringing her up to the wind, so that the crew began to breathe more easily. The frigate was headed out to sea, where it would naturally be supposed the water would deepen, but at this moment a harsh, grating noise was heard, chilling the blood of every seaman aboard, and the next instant the bow shot five or six feet out of water, the shock throwing many prostrate on the deck and nearly wrenching the masts out of the frigate. For a moment a profound silence prevailed, as the men stared in each other's pale faces and breathlessly awaited the outcome. But a few sharp taps of the drum recalled them to their senses, and they hastened to their quarters in perfect order. It was found that the *Philadelphia* had twelve feet of water forward and seventeen abaft, whereas she required eighteen and a half forward and twenty and a half astern. A boat was then lowered, and on taking soundings it was found that the deepest water was astern.

The position of the frigate was perilous in the extreme—hard and fast aground at the entrance of the enemy's principal harbor, from which their numerous gunboats and corsairs would soon issue, and selecting their positions would batter her to pieces with impunity. But this was not the only danger that threatened the ship, for at this season of the year violent gales rendered navigation in the Mediterranean exceedingly difficult, and should a heavy wind come on while the *Philadelphia* was thus fast on a sunken ledge, a great distance from the nearest land, she would

soon be pounded to pieces and her crew left to struggle in the open sea.

Beset with these appalling dangers, Captain Bainbridge went about the task of extricating his ship from her critical position with that coolness and decision which characterized him as a commander. The sails were set aback, topgallant sails loosed and heavy pressure put on her, the wind being two points off the starboard bow. The anchors were then thrown overboard,



Diagram explaining the loss of the Philadelphia.

The walled city of Tripoli is seen on the extreme left of the diagram; the fine dotted lines show the shoal water, while the heavier dotted lines show the courses taken by the *Philadelphia* and the coaster she was chasing; the numerals in the diagram show the number of fathoms of water; the shoal represented at the right hand upper corner of the diagram is the one the *Philadelphia* ran on. The Bashaw's castle is represented in the lower right-hand corner of the diagram of the walled city of Tripoli.

guns run aft and the water started, but the ship held fast, for having a headway of seven or eight knots when she struck she piled a mass of water under her bows which, together with the ground swell, carried her too far upon the reef to be floated off by ordinary means. In the meantime the xebec which the *Philadelphia* had been chasing gained the harbor and car-

ried news of the disaster to Tripoli, and soon afterward nine gunboats were seen sweeping out of the harbor. All the frigate's guns, except a few carronades astern, were then run overboard, together with all the anchors, and by the time this was done the Tripolitans had opened fire, but at such a respectful distance that it was not effective. This was answered by the quarter-deck carronades, but with a similar lack of effect. In the meantime the ship drove higher up on the rocks, and soon began to careen so as to render her guns useless, and at half past six o'clock she fell over on her port beam.

As the full extent of the disaster dawned upon the natives they became bolder, and gradually took positions where the Americans could not bring their guns to bear upon them, not even after cutting away a part of the stern. Up to this time every attempt to float the frigate had been futile, and as a last resort the foremast was cut away, and in falling it brought the main topgallant mast with it. As the ship still remained immovable it became necessary to strike, as further resistance would only result in useless bloodshed ; but before this was done the magazine was flooded, the pumps were blocked, and holes bored through the bottom of the ship, so that in case the enemy succeeded in floating her off she would sink. At five o'clock the flag was hauled down. The Tripolitans then ceased their fire, but mistrusted the sincerity of the surrender, nor was it until nearly dark that they could be induced to take possession. Then began a scene of indiscriminate plundering and pilfering, which was as annoying as it was contemptible. The swords, epaulets, watches, pocket trinkets, money, clothing, and even the cravats and outside garments of the officers were taken, and it was only by a most determined defense that Captain Bainbridge saved the locket around his neck containing a miniature of his wife. The prisoners, three hundred and fifteen in all, were hurried aboard the gunboats and taken to the city.

Captain Bainbridge gives the names of his officers thus taken into captivity as follows: David Porter (afterward famous for his cruise in the *Essex*), first lieutenant; Jacob Jones (afterward the hero of the *Wasp–Frolic* fight), second lieutenant; Theodore Hunt, third lieutenant; Benjamin Smith, fourth lieutenant; William S. Osborn, lieutenant of marines; John Ridgely, surgeon; Jonathan Cowdery, surgeon's mate; Nicholas Harwood, surgeon's mate; Keith Spence, purser; Robert Gamble, Bernard Henry, Benjamin Franklin Reed, James Gibbon, Daniel Tod Patterson (who commanded the naval forces at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815), James Biddle (afterward commander of the *Hornet* in her fight with the *Penguin*), James Renshaw (who was commander of the *Enterprise* and did good service in the War of 1812), Wallace Wormly, William Cutbush, Richard R. Jones and Simon Smith, midshipmen. Others in the ship were: William Anderson, captain's clerk; William Knight, sailing-master; William Godby, carpenter; George Hodger, boatswain; Richard Stephenson, gunner; Joseph Douglass, sailmaker; Minor Forentine, master's mate.

About ten o'clock that night the boats containing the American prisoners reached the mole, and the men were conducted under a strong escort through the narrow, winding streets, amid throngs of wondering natives, to the Bashaw's castle. So eager was that potentate to see them that, notwithstanding the late hour, they were ushered into his audience hall, where he was seated in his chair of state, surrounded by his divan and guards, all richly dressed for the occasion. After being questioned as to the force of the American squadron and the naval resources of the United States, the prisoners were conducted into another apartment, where a supper was provided for them. At midnight they were again led into the audience chamber, and were consigned to the special care of Sidi Mohammed

D'Ghiers, the Bashaw's prime minister. They were then marched through the town to the building formerly occupied by the American consul, which was to be their temporary prison. Although it was now one o'clock in the morning, the Danish consul, Mr. Nissen, paid them a visit of condolence; and during the entire period of their captivity this gentleman did his utmost to lighten their burdens, and interceded in their behalf.

Two days after the disaster a strong northerly wind drove the water of the Mediterranean against the African coast and lifted the *Philadelphia's* stern off the ledge of rocks, although her bow still held fast. Cables and anchors were then run out astern, and by hauling altogether the ship was got into deep water, the holes in her bottom in the meantime having been plugged, and her pumps put in working order. On the 5th of November she was towed to the city and anchored about a quarter of a mile from the Bashaw's castle. Her guns, anchors and shot had been thrown overboard in the shoal water on the reef, but were easily raised by the Turks and replaced in the ship. The court-martial which was convened to inquire into the loss of this frigate gave the following verdict:

"June 29, 1805.—The court, having deliberated on the evidence from the testimony of the witnesses heard in this case, are decidedly of opinion that Captain William Bainbridge acted with fortitude and conduct in the loss of his ship, the United States frigate *Philadelphia*, on the 31st of October, 1803, and that no degree of censure should attach itself to him from that event.

"James Barron, *President;*

"William Eaton, *Acting Judge Advocate.*"

CHAPTER VI.

THE FRIGATE PHILADELPHIA.

THE capture of the *Philadelphia* and her twenty-two quarter-deck officers, besides the seamen, gave the war a far more serious aspect than it had yet assumed. The enormous ransom the Bashaw expected to get for these prisoners would more than compensate him for the losses and inconveniences he might experience in a war; while threats of torturing officers who, as he was aware, were connected with some of the most influential families in the United States gave him a hold on the Americans of which he well knew how to avail himself. This state of affairs put the Bashaw in a genial frame of mind, and he treated the American officers with much leniency. He even allowed them to ride out a few miles into the picturesque suburbs of Tripoli, and they forgot, as they wandered among the beautiful groves of olive, fig and lemon trees, the bitterness of their captivity. During the thirty days of the Fast of Ramadan, when the Mohammedans denied themselves many pleasures, they treated their prisoners with kindness. The fast was followed by a festival of five days called the Biaram, and on one occasion Captain Bainbridge and some of his officers were ushered into the audience hall where the Bashaw, surrounded by his children, officers of the divan and life guards, all in gala dress, sprinkled the Americans with attar of roses and fumigated them with frankincense, after which Neapolitan slaves brought in coffee and sherbet.

On leaving the audience hall Captain Bainbridge noticed three beautiful little boys sitting in the court-

yard, the sad expression on their faces forming a striking contrast to the gay scenes around them. The American officers were told that these children belonged to the deposed Bashaw of Tripoli, Hamet Karamauli, and were held as hostages for the good behavior and meek submission of their father, who was a wanderer among the Mamelukes of Egypt. Noticing that much covert sympathy for the children was shown by the people in the castle it occurred to Captain Bainbridge that the deposed Bashaw, with the assistance of the American squadron, might make a serious revolt against the usurper of the throne, against whom the United States was carrying on war. How this idea was carried out will be shown in another chapter.

Not many weeks after the loss of the *Philadelphia* a messenger abruptly entered the room occupied by Captain Bainbridge and told him that the Bashaw desired to see him at once. When ushered into the presence of the despot, Captain Bainbridge was informed that a Tripolitan ship had been captured by the *John Adams* and that the prisoners had been treated harshly, and it was intimated that if they were not released the Americans in Tripoli would be subjected to the severest treatment. This was only the first of the Bashaw's attempts to frighten his captives, and the Americans in the squadron, into concessions by threats of torture. Captain Bainbridge replied that the Americans had always treated their Tripolitan prisoners with kindness, and he did not believe that they would now do otherwise. As this reply was not satisfactory, the Bashaw ordered that at nine o'clock on the following morning the American officers be removed from their comfortable quarters—which were due to the efforts of Mr. Nissen, the Danish consul—to the loathsome prison in the castle. At the appointed hour the chief slave driver with his underlings marched the officers through several streets to the common prison in which were confined the crew of the ship. In this filthy place,

which was ordinarily used for smoking hides, they were obliged to remain without food, except a little black bread and water, which was offered by the seamen as a part of their own allowance. In the evening a visit of condolence was paid by the admiral, the renegade Scotchman Lisle, who urged Captain Bainbridge to accede to the Bashaw's wishes. The latter replied with firmness that, as he was a prisoner, the Bashaw could subject him to torture or could "lop off" his head, but "he can not force me to commit an act incompatible with the character of an American officer." Finding that the officers could not be swerved from this determination, the Bashaw on the following day returned them to their former quarters.

It was not long before Captain Bainbridge, with the assistance of Mr. Nissen, managed to open communications with Captain Edward Preble. In one of these letters—written with lemon juice, which on being held to the fire became legible—dated December 5, 1803, Captain Bainbridge suggested the feasibility of destroying the *Philadelphia* at her anchorage. An extract from this letter will reveal the plan: "Charter a small merchant schooner, fill her with men and have her commanded by fearless and determined officers. Let the vessel enter the harbor at night, with her men secreted below deck; steer her directly on board the frigate and then let the officers and men board, sword in hand, and there is no doubt of their success. It will be necessary to take several good row boats in order to facilitate the retreat after the enterprise has been accomplished. The frigate in her present condition is a powerful auxiliary battery for the defense of the harbor. Though it will be impossible to remove her from her anchorage and thus restore this beautiful vessel to our navy, yet, as she may and no doubt will be repaired, an important end will be gained by her destruction."

Having settled the difficulty with the Governor of

Tangiers, Captain Preble arrived at Gibraltar on the 15th of October and proceeded to Cadiz, where he formally declared his intention of blockading the port of Tripoli. On the 13th of November he sailed from Gibraltar for Algiers, where he landed the United States consul, Mr. Lear, and then resumed his course for Malta. On the 24th he spoke to the British frigate *Amazon*, and learned of the loss of the *Philadelphia.* He arrived at Malta on the 27th of November, and soon afterward made for Syracuse, meeting the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Decatur, on the way. Having completed his final preparations, he sailed on the 17th of December for Tripoli.

Captain Preble described Tripoli as "a city well walled, protected by batteries judiciously constructed, mounting one hundred and fifteen pieces of heavy cannon, and defended by twenty-five thousand Arabs and Turks; the harbor, protected by nineteen gunboats, two galleys, two schooners of eight guns each and a brig mounting ten guns, ranged in order of battle, forming a strong line of defense at secure moorings inside a long range of rocks and shoals extending more than two miles to the eastward of the town, which from the harbor protects them from the northern gales, and renders it impossible for a vessel of the *Constitution's* draft to approach near enough to destroy them, as they are sheltered by rocks, and can retire under that shelter to the shore, unless they choose to expose themselves in the different channels and openings of the reef, for the purpose of annoying their enemies. Each of their gunboats mounts a heavy 18- or 26-pounder in the bow and two brass howitzers on the quarters, and carries from thirty-six to fifty men. The galleys have each one hundred men; the schooners and brigs have about the same number."

In the midst of this formidable armament lay the *Philadelphia*, with her guns all mounted and double shotted, and with a full complement of Turks and

Tripolitans. She was moored under the guns of the Bashaw's castle, within range of all the batteries; and besides this the Tripolitan cruisers, galleys and gunboats, fully manned and armed, were anchored between her and the shore.

On the 23d of December the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Decatur, was dispatched in chase of a Tripolitan ketch, which, when overtaken, was found to be the *Mastico*, bound for Constantinople with female slaves for the Sultan. This vessel had been constructed for a gunboat by the French in their expeditions against Egypt, and from their service it had passed into the hands of the Tripolitans. Soon afterward a heavy gale compelled the squadron to put into Syracuse for repairs. On the receipt of the letter from Captain Bainbridge, suggesting the feasibility of destroying the *Philadelphia* at her moorings, Captain Preble hesitated, for he had no vessel that sufficiently resembled a Tripolitan merchant craft to deceive the Turks, but by the capture of the *Mastico* this difficulty was removed. Captain Preble then broached the plan to Lieutenant Decatur, who immediately volunteered for the hazardous service. The ketch was armed and fitted for the desperate attempt, while the details of the undertaking were discussed and perfected in the cabin of the *Constitution* as she lay at anchor in Syracuse. Not knowing of these arrangements, Lieutenant Charles Stewart, who had recently arrived in the *Siren* from Gibraltar, offered to cut out the *Philadelphia* with the *Siren's* men, but Captain Preble informed him that he had already given Lieutenant Decatur the honor of heading this enterprise.

As soon as the nature of the project leaked out volunteers pressed forward from all sides, the officers and men being eager to enlist in the expedition; but the men of the *Enterprise* insisted on their privilege, as captors of the ketch, to exclusive participation in the attempt. As the *Mastico* could carry but a limited

number, only a part of the *Enterprise's* people would be needed; and assembling his crew on deck, Lieutenant Decatur explained the nature and perils of the expedition in a few words, and then asked for volunteers. Every man and boy in the schooner offered his services, and sixty-two of the more active and experienced were selected. Six officers from the *Enterprise* and six from the *Constitution* were then selected; they were: Lieutenants Stephen Decatur and James Lawrence, Midshipmen Joseph Bainbridge, Jonathan Thorn and Thomas Macdonough, and Surgeon's-Mate Lewis Herrmann, of the *Enterprise*; and Midshipmen Ralph Izard, John Rowe, Charles Morris, Alexander Laws, John Davis and Thomas O. Anderson, of the *Constitution*, while Salvatore Catalano acted as pilot. These, with sixty-two men, made a total of seventy-five. Lieutenant Decatur had strict orders not to attempt to bring out the *Philadelphia*, but to destroy her at her moorings, and for this purpose the ketch was supplied with combustibles of every description prepared for immediate use.

Among the volunteers was a slender youth, nineteen years old, who belonged to the Society of Friends in Philadelphia, but, when punished for some trifling offense he had preferred the perils of the sea to the rebukes of his elders. As he was not included in the first selection of volunteers, he begged Lieutenant Decatur to be allowed to accompany the expedition, but was told that he was not needed. As the ketch was about to start on her hazardous enterprise this youth pressed forward and entreated to be taken aboard; and being sternly questioned as to such an unusual request he suddenly hesitated, and remembering the prohibition of war in his religion, replied, "I wish merely to see the parts." He was accepted, and was one of the foremost in the charge on the *Philadelphia's* forecastle.

On the afternoon of February 9, 1804, the final arrangements having been carefully made, the *Mastico* left Syracuse for Tripoli, accompanied by the *Siren*,

Lieutenant Charles Stewart, to cover the retreat, while the other ships of the squadron remained at Syracuse in order to lull the enemy into a greater sense of security. The little vessels stretched across the Mediterranean, and as night came on they approached the harbor of Tripoli; but the weather, which up to this time had been favorable for the attempt, underwent one of the sudden changes so common in that sea. The wind rose with increasing violence, and the waves ran so high as to render it doubtful if the ketch would be able to enter the port. When about a mile to windward of the town the vessels anchored, and by this time the gale had increased to such fury that the pilot pronounced it extremely hazardous to venture among the numerous rocks and shoals. Unwilling to give over the attempt, Lieutenant Decatur sent Midshipman Morris and the pilot in a boat to reconnoiter. The men pulled with muffled oars close to the northern passage, and found that the predictions of the pilot were well grounded; for not only would the entrance be attended with great risk, but the sea breaking over the rocks would make it impossible to return, and Midshipman Morris put back to the ketch with this report. In attempting to get aboard, the boat was dashed to pieces, and it was only by the greatest exertions that the men were rescued. In the meantime the *Siren* had got out and armed her boats to cover the retreat, but they were compelled to return. The enterprise was necessarily postponed until the weather moderated; and orders were given to weigh anchor, but such was the violence of the waves and the rolling of the ketch that it was nearly daylight before this could be done. Lieutenant Charles Stewart and several men of the *Siren* were injured by the capstan running away with the bars. After much difficulty and loss of time they were compelled to cut their cables, and at daybreak they had scarcely got out of sight of the town. Running a short dis-

tance from Tripoli the vessels hove to, hoping the weather would moderate so as to make it possible to renew the attempt on the following night.



Diagram of the harbor of Tripoli.

B, shows the position of the *Philadelphia* when recaptured by the Americans; the dotted line shows the course taken by the *Mastico.*

But for six days the gale continued with unabated fury, tossing the schooners about in a most alarming manner, the *Mastico* especially being in imminent danger of foundering or being driven on the rocks. The sufferings of Lieutenant Decatur and his men were much aggravated by the construction of the ketch, which was of only thirty or forty tons burden, and had no accommodations whatever. "The commander, three lieutenants and the surgeon occupied the very small cabin. Six midshipmen and the pilot had a platform laid on the water casks, the surface of which they covered when they lay down to sleep, and at so small a distance below the deck that their heads would reach it when seated on the platform. The marines had corresponding accommodations on the opposite side, and the sailors had only the surface of the casks in the hold. To these inconveniences were added the want of any room on the deck for exercise and the attack of innumerable vermin, which our prede-

cessors, the slaves, had left behind them."[1] To make matters worse, they had been provisioned for a few days only, and, as if their misfortunes were not already heavy enough, the salt meat was found to be spoiled; so that during this long week of privation and hardship they were compelled to live on a short allowance of bread and water.

By the 15th the weather had sufficiently moderated to make a renewal of the attempt possible. Waiting until dark, the vessels again approached Tripoli, but after spending the night in sounding and getting their bearings they found they had gone too far eastward to effect their object, and on the approach of day they were compelled to retire. The afternoon of the 16th gave promise of a favorable night. Decatur then cheered his men with a speech, in which he set forth the details of the attack, which were simple and concise. First of all, the spar deck of the *Philadelphia* was to be cleared, and then the gun deck. The whole party having united in this, they were to divide as follows: Lieutenant Decatur, with Midshipmen Izard and Rowe and fifteen men, to keep guard of the upper deck; Lieutenant Lawrence and ten men with Midshipmen Laws and Macdonough, to fire the berth deck and forward storeroom; Midshipmen Joseph Bainbridge and John Davis and ten men to fire the wardroom and steerage; and Midshipman Morris and eight men to fire the cockpit and after storeroom. Midshipman Thorn, with the gunner and surgeon and thirteen men, was detailed to remain in the ketch; while Midshipman Anderson was to man the cutter, pick up all boats found alongside, and prevent as many of the enemy as possible from swimming ashore. The watchword "Philadelphia" was then given, and strict orders were issued not to use a musket, pistol or firearm of any kind, except in case of great emergency. The general plan

[1] Autobiography of Commodore Morris.

was, first to clear the ship of the enemy, fire her in several places with combustibles prepared for that purpose, and then to get as far on the return as possible before the alarm could be given to the batteries or before the light from the burning frigate would enable the Tripolitans to fire with accuracy. Having taken every precaution that prudence and forethought could suggest, and receiving a re-enforcement of seven men from the *Siren*, Lieutenant Decatur gave the order to weigh anchor, and at dusk both vessels filled away for Tripoli. The *Siren* had been newly painted and her rig was changed so as to still further deceive the enemy.

When they were about five miles from the town the night was well advanced, but as it was clear and starlit the shore and harbor could easily be seen. The daring adventurers now bade adieu to their friends in the *Siren*, and amid many Godspeeds boldly set out on their dangerous mission. Finding that he would gain the harbor too soon, Lieutenant Decatur put out buckets and other drags astern to lessen her speed without shortening sail. As the wind gradually died out these drags were removed, and the ketch made nearly two knots an hour. About nine o'clock the *Mastico* gained the harbor by the eastern passage and was in full view of the city. Now that she had cut loose from her consort and was standing alone into the enemy's stronghold the men began to realize that they were entering upon an undertaking from which the chances of escaping were slight indeed. Around them lowered the shores of the harbor, crowned with dark batteries, whose rows of silent cannon seemed ready, at the touch of a spring, to close on the audacious little ketch like the jaws of a trap; while away back in the farthermost corner of the bay, snugly moored under the guns of the Bashaw's castle, lay the *Philadelphia*.

But it was too late to think better of their daring, and the men nerved themselves anew to their desperate task. Onward went the ketch into the very gates of

death, the gradually failing wind causing her to creep slowly and stealthily along like a prowling beast of prey. An occasional fishing craft that lazily floated past her, or the boats that glided between the shipping and the shore, and the lights from the city that came shimmering across the water were the only signs of a wakeful enemy. Soon the *Philadelphia* was distinctly made out. Her main and mizzen topmasts were housed (her foremast had been cut away when she was on the reefs), her lower yards were on the gunwales, and her numerous well-lighted ports seemed to eye the ketch with distrust. "As we advanced into the harbor," wrote Midshipman Charles Morris, afterward captain, "strict silence was enjoined and observed. The injunction, however, appeared to be unnecessary. No one seemed to be disposed to enter into conversation, but to be absorbed by his own reflections. My own thoughts were busy, now reverting to friends at home, now to the perils we were about to meet. 'Should I be able to justify the expectations of the former by meeting properly the dangers of the latter?' 'How was I prepared for the death which might possibly be my fate?' These thoughts, with others of a somber character, mixed with calculations to secure a prominent position when boarding, passed rapidly through my mind; and the minds of others were, no doubt, employed on similar subjects."

As the *Mastico* drew near to the object of the expedition Lieutenant Decatur ordered his men to conceal themselves, as such an unusual number might arouse suspicion among the people on shore. Many therefore lay flat on the deck close to the bulwarks, while others concealed themselves behind barrels and masts and in dark corners, but six or eight of the crew dressed as Maltese sailors purposely remained in the light of the moon. A little before ten o'clock the ketch came within hailing distance of the frigate, when Lieutenant Decatur ordered the quartermaster at the wheel to steer so as to foul her at the bow, where they would

be less exposed to her guns. With a grim "Ay, ay, sir," the veteran tar brought the *Mastico's* bow around, heading directly for the *Philadelphia's* fore chains. While they were yet at a considerable distance the anxious silence was broken by a challenge from a sentinel in the frigate, and at the sound of his voice the American officers and seamen tightened their grip on their weapons, riveted their eyes on their leader, and made an involuntary movement as if to spring, ready for the word to board. Lieutenant Decatur, who had stationed himself beside the pilot, instructed him to reply to the sentinel that the ketch had just arrived from Malta, had survived a terrible gale and, her anchors having been lost, desired to make fast to the frigate's cables until another could be procured from the shore. The Turkish commander, who was recognized by Catalano, asked what brig that was in the offing—for it seems that, in spite of all precautions, the *Siren* had been seen. With much tact Decatur instructed Catalano to reply that it was the *Transfer*, formerly a British man-of-war, which had been purchased at Malta for the Tripolitans, and was anxiously awaited at Tripoli. The pilot was then ordered to engage the attention of the frigate's people by telling them with what commodities the ketch was laden. During this conversation many of the Turks were seen leaning over the bulwarks or peering through the ports, searching the *Mastico* with curious eyes.

The little vessel at last was almost within reach of the frigate's fore chains, and the order to board was momentarily expected, when a "cat's paw," or a light puff of air from the south, struck her sails and took her aback. This unlooked for mishap placed the ketch in a perilous position, for she now backed and soon was exposed to the frigate's entire port broadside, not more than twenty yards distant. Had the least nervousness or a premature movement on the part of the men discovered to the Turks the real character of the ketch, they would have blown her out of the water. At this

critical moment Decatur showed those qualities which in after years ranked him among our greatest naval heroes. Not the slightest indication of alarm could be discovered in his bearing or voice, and the manœuvre necessary to regain the frigate's fore chains was executed as coolly and naturally as if in the open sea. The *Mastico's* boat was now sent out to make fast to one of the ringbolts in the *Philadelphia's* fore chains, so that they could haul the ketch to the desired position, but the Turks also had lowered a boat with a hawser aboard, intending to secure the ketch at their stern rather than at their cables, which would have proved a serious detriment to the original plan. With great self-possession the Americans, as they were returning to the ketch, took the hawser from the Tripolitan boat, intimating that they would do as desired; the broken Italian used in their discourse and the great diversity of languages in the many coasters trading in the Mediterranean ports serving to lull any possible suspicions of the Tripolitans. The line which had been made fast to the frigate's fore chains was immediately passed along the *Mastico's* deck, so that the men could haul on it while still lying down. By a strong, steady pull they checked the stern board of the ketch and she began to move ahead again. This forward and diagonal tension caused her gradually to swing alongside of the *Philadelphia*, where the Turks would soon be looking directly upon her decks and discover the men who were concealed by the bulwarks. Seeing this danger, Lieutenant Decatur quietly but emphatically urged the men to greater exertion.

While they were about ten yards from the much-desired position the enemy discovered that the ketch still carried her anchors, and, loudly rebuking the pilot for the falsehood, sent a man down their fore chains to cut the rope on which the Americans were hauling. The ketch was now fairly alongside, so that the men lying on her decks could be plainly seen in the moonlight;

but as yet no alarm seems to have been excited, until one Turk, more inquisitive than his fellows, leaned far over the frigate's side and saw the men hauling on the line. Instantly the cry "Amerikano! Amerikano!" resounded through the ship, and, followed by the rapid shuffling of slipshod feet and a jargon of excited voices, proclaimed that they were discovered and that further concealment was unnecessary. The all-important object was to haul the ketch to the fore chains before the enemy could cut the line, so the Americans quickly rising to their feet as a man pulled with a will; and although the Turks succeeded in severing the line, yet the ketch had acquired such momentum that she was carried to the desired spot and was immediately secured. Lieutenant Decatur, who was standing with Midshipmen Morris and Laws, ready to spring aboard, now jumped with the two midshipmen to the *Philadelphia's* main chain plates and then gave the order to board. Midshipman Laws endeavored to enter one of the frigate's ports, but the pistols in his boarding belt were caught between the guns and the port. Lieutenant Decatur slipped while jumping, so that Midshipman Morris was the first to gain the *Philadelphia's* deck, where he was quickly joined by Decatur and Laws. The Americans, with cutlass and boarding-pike in hand, were now swarming over the port bulwarks and through the gun ports. The astounded Turks ran over to the starboard side or crowded forward on the forecastle, while the rapid succession of splashes which could be distinctly heard around the ship told that many of them were plunging into the water. The quarter-deck was soon cleared, when, forming in a compact body, the Americans charged forward and drove all the Tripolitans on the forecastle overboard. Hearing the disturbance, many Turks came on deck from below to learn the cause, but on catching a glimpse of the Americans they cast themselves into the sea or secreted themselves in the hold. The boarders



Boarding the Philadelphia.

next ran below, where some resistance was encountered, but after a brief struggle the enemy gave way, so that in ten minutes from the time the first man appeared over the bulwarks the ship was captured, not a firearm of any description having been used. While in the cabin Midshipman Morris met Lieutenant Decatur coming in the door, and owing to the darkness the American commander mistook his midshipman for one of the Tripolitans, and was about to cut him down when the watchword "Philadelphia" arrested the blow. According to agreement, a rocket was sent up, notifying the *Siren* of the capture of the *Philadelphia*.

The men now set to work passing up the combustibles from the ketch, and in a few minutes this was accomplished. Then forming in their several divisions they proceeded to the work of destruction, which was done in a most thorough and expeditious manner. In fact, their movements were so rapid that the party which had been detailed to fire the cockpit had difficulty in getting back, owing to the dense volumes of smoke from the wardroom. Captain Morris, in his Autobiography, says: "Passing through the wardroom, which I found deserted, I awaited in the cockpit the men who had gone for the combustibles. These were so delayed that we had none when the order was given to set fire; but as they came a moment after, they were distributed and fire communicated before we left our station. In the meantime the fire on the deck above us had communicated so rapidly that it was with no small difficulty and danger that our party reached the spar deck by the forward hatchways." By the time the last party regained the deck flames were bursting from the ports and hatches; and seeing that the frigate could not possibly be saved, Lieutenant Decatur gave the order to return to the *Mastico*. He had not remained on the frigate more than twenty-five minutes. Lieutenant Decatur was the last man to leave the *Philadelphia*, and the bow of the *Mastico* had actually swung

off when he jumped into her shrouds and made his way to her deck. On returning to the ketch the adventurers found that they still had great dangers to face, for so rapid had been the progress of the conflagration that the *Mastico* herself was in imminent danger of being consumed. With all haste they tried to shove her off with poles and sweeps, but in spite of their greatest efforts she could not be moved entirely clear. She dropped astern, with her boom afoul, and her jigger flapping against the frigate's quarter gallery. All this time flames came pouring out of the *Philadelphia's* ports and leaping into the cabin of the ketch, where all the ammunition of the party, covered only by a tarpaulin, was stored. For some time it could not be discovered what kept the *Mastico* fast to the frigate's side, but after a search it was found to be the hawser with which the Turks had secured her to the frigate's stern. In the excitement of the moment this had been forgotten, but it was now quickly severed with cutlasses, and the ketch slowly drew away from the burning frigate.

But the Americans seemed to escape from one danger only to face another, for by this time the flames had made such progress as to envelop the ship in a mass of fire, which illuminated the bay for miles around and enabled the gunners on shore to aim with accuracy. The Tripolitans fortunately had not as yet sufficiently recovered from their surprise to man their guns, but realizing the danger the Americans took to their sweeps, eight to a side, and put forth their best efforts to get out of gunshot. As the *Mastico* came fairly into view of the gunboats they opened fire, and aroused from their stupor by the sound of these guns the Tripolitans on shore rushed to their batteries and began firing. Soon the shot fell thick and fast, splashing the water on all sides of the ketch, the missiles striking the sea between the *Mastico* and the burning frigate, threw up a spray that was radiant with all the colors of the rainbow. But the enemy

were too excited to aim well, and although the ketch was within half a mile of their heaviest guns, in plain sight, only one shot struck her, and that passed through the topgallant sail. The efforts of the men quickly urged the ketch out of range, and at the entrance of the harbor they were met by boats with men from the *Siren*, under Lieutenant James R. Caldwell, who had pulled beyond the rocks in their anxiety to learn the fate of their comrades, or in case of pursuit to cover their retreat.

The men now rested on their sweeps while they gazed on the work of destruction. The burning ship presented a spectacle of awful grandeur. Long tongues of flame thrust themselves from the numerous port-holes, licking her black sides, while the tar, melted by the blistering heat, boiled and ran down in huge drops. The flames ran up the masts and shrouds, curving over at the tops like glowing columns with fiery capitals. Soon the well-oiled rigging above the tops became ignited, and suggested fiery serpents twisting and writhing up and down the masts, leaping from yard to yard or falling from a dizzy height, struggling in mid-air with each other in hideous contortions, and on reaching the water vanishing in hisses. Every now and then a cannon, becoming heated, was discharged, the recoil sending up myriads of sparks, which, caught in the currents of hot air, were swept upward in the smoke until they gradually fluttered out of sight in the black heavens. The shipping in the harbor loomed up behind the frigate, and the white walls of the city with its batteries, castle, mosques and graceful minarets formed an indistinct background, while the inhabitants, startled from repose, hurried to and fro in the steep, narrow streets, or, assembling on their housetops and other vantage points, gazed upon the conflagration with dismay and terror. Then a terrific explosion took place, and the burning frigate was rent into fragments, which were hurled upward in the night, and, reaching the

zenith, gracefully curved and slowly descended in a cascade of fire. The beautiful pyrotechnical display was over, and the harbor was left again enshrouded in darkness and silence. The adventurers once more bent to their sweeps and pulled beyond the rocks, where they were soon telling to eager listeners the story of one of the most audacious and successful exploits in naval history, or as Nelson, who at this time was in command of the British blockading fleet before Toulon, expressed it, "the most bold and daring act of the age."

No trustworthy estimate of the loss the Tripolitans sustained in this affair has ever been made. Twenty men were reported killed during the struggle for the lower gun deck, but there is no doubt that many more secreted themselves in the hold and perished with the ship. The remaining Mussulmans jumped overboard, many of them were probably drowned. Only one prisoner was taken, a wounded Tripolitan who swam to the ketch; and although the party had received strict orders not to take prisoners, he was allowed to remain on board. Of the Americans, only one man was wounded.

Having accomplished their mission, the *Mastico* and the *Siren* made sail for Syracuse and arrived there on the 19th of February, where Captain Preble awaited them with great anxiety. The ketch was rechristened *Intrepid*, in honor of this brilliant achievement. Lieutenant Decatur was promoted to the rank of captain, and he received a sword from Congress, while the officers and men serving under him were warmly applauded. Nearly all of them gave conspicuous service to their country in subsequent wars.

The destruction of his prize greatly exasperated the Bashaw, and he vented his Oriental rage upon his prisoners. He ordered the prison to be immediately surrounded by a cordon of troops and all intercourse between the officers and the men to be interrupted, lest some exploit even more daring than the capture of the frigate under the guns of his castle might be attempted.

On the 1st of March the officers were conducted under a strong guard to the castle and confined in a cold, damp apartment, with one opening at the top, grated with iron bars, which was their only means of receiving light and air. In this place they were entombed during the rest of their captivity. What remained of the *Philadelphia* after the explosion sank to the bottom of the harbor of Tripoli, where it still lies. When Captain Breese in the *Cumberland*, in 1844, visited Tripoli, he caused a portion of the wreck to be raised, and had the water-logged timber made into paper knives and other souvenirs.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BOMBARDMENT OF TRIPOLI.

ALTHOUGH the destruction of the *Philadelphia* removed from the harbor of Tripoli its most formidable auxiliary battery, the place was still well defended and the Bashaw was far from being subdued or inclined to accept terms satisfactory to the Americans. Captain Preble therefore determined to maintain a regular blockade of the port and to begin a bombardment of the town as soon as he could collect a sufficient force. The *Siren*, Master-Commandant Charles Stewart, and the *Nautilus*, Master-Commandant Richard Somers, were immediately stationed off the port, and early on the morning of March 21, 1804, they discovered a brig in the offing endeavoring to get to sea. On making out the American cruisers she made every effort to beat back into the harbor; at the same time several Tripolitan gunboats were observed hovering near, apparently with the intention of supporting her in case of attack. The *Nautilus* bore down on the gunboats, and as she approached they prudently withdrew to the harbor. The *Siren* in the meantime overhauled the brig, which proved to be the privateer *Transfer*, from Malta, with an English commission, carrying sixteen guns and eighty men. When captured she had her crew at quarters, but no resistance was made. She was seized for violation of the blockade and sent to Syracuse, and on being taken into the service under the name of the *Scourge* she was placed under the command of Lieutenant John Herbert Dent, the acting captain of the *Constitution*. Subsequent information in-

duced Captain Preble to believe that the brig actually belonged to the Bashaw of Tripoli and was waiting to take his consul to Malta.

In the following month, April, a felucca was discovered attempting to run into the harbor under cover of a fog, and the blockading force immediately made after her. The *Siren*, being the nearest, was rapidly coming up when the chase, in order to prevent capture, ran ashore about ten miles west of Tripoli. The *Siren's* boats, under the command of Lieutenant James R. Caldwell, were then sent against the enemy, but on nearing land one of the boats struck a rock, and the delay caused by this mishap enabled the Tripolitan cavalry to assemble in such numbers as to render a boat attack impracticable. Lieutenant Caldwell, however, did not give over the attempt until several of his men were killed or wounded, without having inflicted any loss on the enemy. The *Argus* with the schooners then ran inshore as close as the shoals would allow, and opened such an effective fire that in a few minutes the felucca was destroyed. The *Siren* at the same time gained a position at the opening of the ravine behind which the Turks were concealed, and delivered a fire of grape and canister that dislodged them. The felucca was said to have been laden with salt, a commodity of great value to the Tripolitans at that time.

Captain Preble had been actively engaged in making arrangements for the bombardment of Tripoli, and by the 25th of July the following vessels had been collected off the harbor: The 44-gun frigate *Constitution* (flagship), Captain Preble; the 16-gun brig *Siren*, Master-Commandant Charles Stewart; the 16-gun brig *Argus*, Master-Commandant Isaac Hull; the 12-gun schooner *Nautilus*, Master-Commandant Richard Somers; the 12-gun schooner *Vixen*, Master-Commandant John Smith; the 14-gun brig *Scourge* (*Transfer*), Lieutenant John Herbert Dent; and the 12-gun schooner

Enterprise, Lieutenant James Decatur. Besides this force, Captain Preble, through the kindness of the King of the Two Sicilies, secured the loan of two bomb vessels and six gunboats. The number of men in this squadron all told was one thousand and sixty.

"The gunboats," said Captain Preble, "are constructed for the defense of harbors; they are flat-bottomed and heavy, and do not sail or row tolerably well. They were never intended to go to sea, and I find can not be navigated with safety unless assisted by tow-ropes from larger and better sailing vessels, nor even then in very bad weather. The bomb vessels are about thirty tons, carrying a 13-inch brass sea mortar and forty men; the gunboats, twenty-five tons, carry a long iron 24-pounder in the bow, with a complement of thirty-five men." A comparison of the force of Captain Preble's squadron with the strength of Tripoli will show how overwhelming were the odds against which the Americans had to contend.

Comparative forces before Tripoli.

	Heavy guns.	Light guns.	Total.	Men.
American:	48	86	134	1,060
Tripolitans:	134	66	200	25,000

Such was the inclemency of the weather after the arrival of the squadron off Tripoli, July 25th, that not until the afternoon of the 28th were the vessels able to stand toward the coast. Scarcely had they anchored when the wind shifted from the east-southeast to the north-northwest, and soon increased to a gale, which placed the squadron in a perilous position, so at 6 P. M. the signal to weigh anchor was given. The gale increased in violence until the 31st, when it blew a hurricane. By the 3d of August it had sufficiently moderated to allow a near approach to the coast. In this gale the *Constitution* had her close-reefed foresail and main topsail blown from the bolt ropes into ribbons, and had not the wind been from the

south, which gave them the protection of a weather shore, the gunboats and bomb vessels undoubtedly would have been towed under.

At 12.30 P. M., August 3d, Captain Preble advanced to the attack. Observing that the enemy had formed their gunboats into two divisions, nine at the eastern entrance and five at the northern, he determined to begin on them. Accordingly the six American gunboats and the two bombards were dispatched to attack the enemy at the eastern entrance. The first division consisted of gunboat No. 1, Master-Commandant Richard Somers; gunboat No. 2, Lieutenant James Decatur; gunboat No. 3, Lieutenant Joshua Blake. Second division, gunboat No. 4, Captain Stephen Decatur; gunboat No. 5, Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge; gunboat No. 6, Sailing-Master John Trippe. In gunboat No. 1 were Midshipmen Charles Goodwin Ridgeley and William Miller, the former afterward rising to a high rank in the navy. In gunboat No. 4 were Midshipmen Jonathan Thorn and Thomas Macdonough, and in gunboat No. 6 were Midshipmen John D. Henley and David Deacon. The two bombards were commanded by Lieutenant John Herbert Dent and Lieutenant Thomas Robinson, Jr.

These boats immediately made for the enemy. Only Nos. 2, 4 and 6 succeeded in weathering the point, but these, led by the impetuous Captain Stephen Decatur, boldly dashed on to engage three times their force. Reserving his fire until at close quarters, Captain Decatur discharged the long gun, which was loaded with bags of musket balls filled with one thousand bullets each, and then laid the first Tripolitan gunboat alongside. Gallantly seconded by Midshipmen Jonathan Thorn and Macdonough and twenty-two of his seamen, who were armed with pistols, sabers, pikes and tomahawks, he boarded, and a short but fierce struggle took place. The Tripolitan boat was divided in the middle by an open hatchway, and as the Americans came in at

one end of the boat the enemy retreated to the other, leaving a space between them. For a moment there was a pause as each party glared at the other across the opening to discover what move would next be made, but Captain Decatur did not give them long to wait, and charging with his men along the gangway on each side of the hatch he cut down the remaining Turks or drove them into the sea, while eight of them ran below and were made prisoners. So deadly had been the fire of gunboat No. 4 that the Turkish commander was riddled with fourteen bullets. Hauling down the Tripolitan colors and returning to gunboat No. 4, Captain Decatur began towing his prize to a place of safety.

In the meantime gunboat No. 2, Lieutenant James Decatur (brother of Stephen), had singled out an enemy's boat, and reserving his fire until alongside, he delivered his grape and musketry with such effect that the Tripolitans surrendered. But while stepping aboard to take possession he was suddenly set upon by the treacherous Turkish commander and mortally wounded in the forehead with a pistol shot. Before the vessel could be secured the enemy fled. The news of this affair reached Stephen Decatur while he was towing his prize out of range, and casting her adrift he turned about and went in pursuit of his brother's murderer. Revenge stimulated the Americans to such exertions that soon their boat ran alongside the fleeing Turk, and after pouring in a fire of grape and musketry they boarded in the smoke. Captain Decatur soon espied the Turkish commander, a man of powerful build, and rushing upon him made a lunge with his boarding-pike. The Mussulman parried the thrust, and seizing the weapon, wrenched it from Decatur's hands and aimed a blow at his breast which Decatur guarded, but in so doing broke his sword short off at the hilt. The Turk instantly made another lunge, and this time Captain Decatur partially warded off the pike but received ugly flesh wounds on his arm and chest.

Before the blow could be repeated he sprang within the weapon and closed with the Mussulman in a desperate hand-to-hand fight. In this his antagonist proved his superiority, for he soon threw Decatur and pinned him to the deck with an iron grip on his throat, while with his disengaged hand he endeavored to draw the shorter of his two yataghans, which were carried especially for such close work.

While the two leaders were thus struggling, their respective crews had rushed to their assistance, so that they became the center of a fierce conflict. Now that they had fallen to the deck, the surging mass of desperate men toppled over them and piled up in an inextricable, smothering heap. The Turkish commander succeeded in drawing his yataghan, but could not immediately free his arm to strike the fatal blow. At this instant Captain Decatur, who had also been struggling to reach some weapon, succeeded in drawing a pistol from his pocket, and though now gasping, blinded and almost suffocated, he passed his hand over the Mussulman's body to feel for some vital part, well knowing that if the bullet failed to cause instant death his own life was lost. Pressing the muzzle of the pistol against the Turk's ribs, as near his heart as he could determine, Decatur fired, and the shot proved instantly fatal. As soon as the surviving Tripolitans learned that their leader was slain they gave way on all sides and jumped overboard. During this *mêlée* a Turk raised his scimiter to strike a blow at Decatur's head, when, seeing the peril of his commander, a sailor, Reuben James, whose arms had been disabled, interposed his head and received a terrible gash in his skull. By this noble sacrifice Decatur's life was undoubtedly saved.[1]

While this fight was going on, Sailing-Master John Trippe, in gunboat No. 6, also conducted himself with

[1] For a sketch of Reuben James' life see Appendix.

conspicuous gallantry. Reserving his fire until within the enemy's smoke, he discharged his grape and musketry and then boarded with cutlass in hand. But the American boat rebounded after fouling and was out of reach before she could be secured alongside, leaving Mr. Trippe with Midshipman John D. Henley and nine men aboard the enemy, cut off from both retreat and support. The situation admitted of no half-way measures, and Mr. Trippe promptly singled out the Turkish commander and engaged him in a personal combat, well knowing that the Tripolitans would flee if their leader fell. The boarders bravely backed his lead and attacked the Mussulmans with the energy of despair. The Turk succeeded in giving Mr. Trippe several saber cuts on the head and soon afterward two on the breast, while he had received no hurt in return. Suddenly making a rush forward, the Turk brought the American officer down on one knee with a fearful blow on the head, but while in this position Mr. Trippe seized the opportunity to run his powerful foe through the abdomen with a boarding-pike and laid him on the deck. Midshipman Henley, supposing the Turk to be dead, stepped over his body, but the Mussulman, conscious of the indignity, although in the agonies of death, seized Henley's ankle and gave it a violent wrench before he expired. During this struggle a Turk aimed a blow at Sailing-Master Trippe from behind, but before it fell, Sergeant Meredith, of the marines, pinned the Turk to the deck with his bayonet. Mr. Trippe received eleven saber cuts in the affair. He spoke in high terms of the gallantry of Midshipman Henley, who supported



A brass cannon captured from the Tripolitans, now in Annapolis.

him. By this time gunboat No. 6 had again come alongside, and her crew hastened to the rescue of their comrades. As usual, the Tripolitans, seeing that their leader had fallen, considered themselves at liberty to flee, and were now plunging into the sea on all sides and swimming to their other boats or to the rocks in the harbor. This vessel was the largest of the Bashaw's gunboats. Such was the confusion and excitement of the moment that none of the Americans thought of lowering the Tripolitan flag, and the *Vixen*, observing her coming down on her, apparently manned by the enemy, gave her a broadside, which brought down the colors, mast, lateen yard and all, but fortunately injured no one. The remaining Tripolitan gunboats by this time had fled to the cover of their batteries, leaving three vessels out of the nine in the hands of the Americans.

While this plucky fight had been going on at the eastern passage the larger vessels of the squadron were maintaining a vigorous bombardment of the town from the northern entrance. Master-Commandant Richard Somers, in gunboat No. 1, finding that he could not reach the enemy at the eastern passage, attacked the Tripolitan gunboats at the northern entrance single-handed, and they retreated. Not satisfied with this, Master-Commandant Somers pursued them within a hundred yards of a battery of twelve guns, which up to this time had restrained its fire lest it might damage the fleeing Tripolitans. When gunboat No. 1 gave over the chase and turned to retreat she exposed herself to the entire battery, and her destruction seemed inevitable; but at this moment a shell from one of the bombards exploded in the battery, blew up the platform and drove the gunners under cover, and before they had sufficiently collected themselves to return to their guns the gunboat gained a place of safety. During this time the bomb vessels, under the command of Lieutenant John Herbert Dent

and Lieutenant Thomas Robinson, although covered with spray from the enemy's shot, maintained a steady and well-directed fire and threw a great number of shells into the town. At 4.30 P. M., the wind having veered around to the north, Captain Preble gave the signal to retire, and the vessels with their prizes retreated in good order, covered by a heavy cannonading from the *Constitution*, the brigs and the schooners.

Thus closed the first day's bombardment of Tripoli. The results had been satisfactory in every respect, and thenceforth the enemy could not be induced to engage the Americans in a hand-to-hand encounter—a species of warfare in which Mussulmans had been deemed most formidable. Twice their five gunboats and two galleys, composing the center division and the reserve, attempted to row out to the assistance of their comrades at the eastern passage, and both times they were driven back by the brigs and schooners. The shore batteries had been thoroughly battered, and about fifty shells were dropped in the town. At times the *Constitution* was within two cable lengths of the rocks and within three cable lengths of the batteries, all of which were silenced the moment her guns were brought to bear, but when she passed out of range they opened again. The frigate was most exposed when wearing and tacking, and the need of another heavy frigate was felt. The manner in which the *Constitution* was handled during this fight excited the admiration of all witnesses, especially the American prisoners in Tripoli. The frigate boldly stood into the harbor, deliberately shortened sail, with the men on the yards and everything going on as calmly as if in a friendly harbor. Then she would come to and discharge her formidable broadside with great effect.

Of the enemy's nineteen gunboats, three were sunk in the harbor, while the decks of several were nearly cleared of men by shot, and many ships in the harbor were injured. The two gunboats captured by Captain

Decatur had thirty-three officers and men killed, and twenty-seven prisoners were taken in them, nineteen of whom were wounded. The prize of Sailing-Master John Trippe lost fourteen killed, and twenty-two prisoners were taken, seven of whom were wounded. Many Tripolitans were wounded and drowned, of whom no accurate list or estimate can be made. The American loss was one killed, Lieutenant James Decatur, and thirteen wounded. Gunboat No. 5, Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge, had her main-yard shot away, while the rigging and sails of the brigs and schooners were considerably cut. The *Constitution*, although exposed to the fire of the enemy's batteries fully two hours, had only one man wounded. A 24-pound shot passed nearly through the center of the mainmast, thirty feet from the deck, the main royal yard and sail were shot away, while two lower shrouds, two backstays, and some running rigging were cut through. Captain Preble himself had a narrow escape. While the ship was wearing, a 32-pound shot came through a stern port on a direct line for his body, but fortunately it struck on the breech of a quarter-deck gun, and broke into fragments that flew about the quarter-deck, which was crowded with men. Only one marine, however, was hurt by it. The officers who were especially mentioned for their gallantry in this brilliant affair, besides those already named, were Lieutenant Charles Gordon, Captain John Hall and Second-Lieutenant Robert Greenleaf, of the marines, Midshipmen Jonathan Thorn, Thomas Macdonough, Charles Goodwin Ridgeley and William Miller, and Sailing-Master Nathaniel Harriden.

From the 3d to the 7th of August the squadron rode at anchor about two leagues north of Tripoli, repairing damages and altering the rig of the captured gunboats, which were found to be much better adapted for this service than the vessels secured from Sicily. They were numbered 7, 8 and 9.

On the night of August 5th, while Midshipman

Charles Morris was in a boat on guard close to the rocks forming the harbor of Tripoli, he suddenly found himself in the presence of a strange vessel. Without waiting to learn her force he boarded her and carried her by surprise, and found that she was a French privateer that had put into Tripoli for water. Her commander was induced to return fourteen badly wounded Tripolitans, who had been taken prisoners, to the enemy. These prisoners informed the Bashaw that "though the Americans in battle were fiercer than lions, yet in treatment of prisoners they were even kinder than Mussulmans." It was learned that the bombardment of the 3d had been more effective than Captain Preble had supposed. Captain Bainbridge, who was a prisoner in Tripoli, describes it as follows: "A number of guns in the battery were dismounted, the city considerably injured, and many of the inhabitants killed. A great portion of the people and all the foreign consuls fled from the city, with the exception of the benevolent Mr. Nissen. So devoted was he to the American prisoners that he remained at the risk of his life and property, in order that he might contribute to their comfort. In one of the attacks a 24-pound shot entered the window of a small room in the turret where Mr. Nissen, only a moment before, had been examining the operations of the squadron. At the commencement of the bombardment the Bashaw surveyed the squadron from his palace windows, and affected to ridicule any attempt which might be made to injure either the batteries or the city. He promised the spectators who were on the terraces that rare sport would presently be enjoyed by observing the triumph of his boats over those of the Americans. In a few minutes, however, he became convinced of his error, and precipitately retreated with an humble and aching heart to his bomb-proof chamber."

At 9 A. M. on the 7th of August the squadron advanced to the second attack, the gunboats Nos. 7, 8

and 9 being commanded by Lieutenant William Montgomery Crane, Lieutenant James R. Caldwell, and Midshipman Jonathan Thorn. The bombards were ordered to take a position in a small bay west of the city, where only seven guns could be brought to bear on them, while at the same time they could annoy the enemy with shells. The gunboats were ordered to silence this battery, and the brigs and schooners were held in readiness to support them in case the enemy's flotilla should venture out to attack. By 2 P. M. the vessels had taken their positions, and at the signal they opened fire at point-blank range. In less than two hours the seven-gun battery had been silenced with the exception of one piece, while the others were probably dismounted, as the walls were demolished. The Tripolitan flotilla did not venture within range, although at one time they made a slight advance. While bringing gunboat No. 1 into close action, Master-Commandant Richard Somers was leaning against her flagstaff, when he saw a shot coming on a line with his head. By stooping, he avoided the shot, which cut the flagstaff in two, after which he coolly resumed his position, leaning against the stump of the staff. At 3.30 P. M. a hot shot passed through the magazine of gunboat No. 8 and blew up her stern. She had on board twenty-eight officers, seamen and marines, ten of whom were killed and six were wounded. Among the killed were Lieutenant James R. Caldwell, first lieutenant of the *Siren*, and Midshipman John S. Dorsey, both officers of great promise. At the time the disaster occurred, Midshipman Robert T. Spence was superintending the loading of a gun, and although the boat was sinking he completed the task, and, firing the shot, jumped into the water with his men. He did not know how to swim, but grasping one of the gunboat's sweeps he managed to keep afloat until he was picked up, with eleven men, by boats from the other vessels. On gaining the decks of the gunboats the rescued men

continued the fight at their new quarters as if nothing had happened. Edmund P. Kennedy, gunner's mate, who had once been impressed into the British service, was captain of this gun and received a midshipman's commission for his gallantry, and afterward rose to a high rank in the navy. But the loss of gunboat No. 8 did not abate the fury of the attack, which was maintained with spirit until 5.30 P. M., when the signal to haul off was given, and the vessels returned to their anchorage.

During this day's bombardment the *Constitution*, owing to an unfavorable wind, was unable to cannonade the batteries, so that the latter gave their undivided attention to the gunboats. Forty-eight shells and about five hundred 24-pound shot were fired. Gunboat No. 4 had a 24-pound shot through her hull, as did also gunboat No. 9, the latter killing two men. Gunboat No. 6, commanded by acting Midshipman Henry Wadsworth, of the *Constitution*, had her lateen yard shot away, while other gunboats were slightly injured in their rigging and sails. The enemy's loss in killed and wounded must have been exceedingly severe, while that of the Americans was twenty-two killed and six wounded.

At the time of this attack Keith Spence, the father of Midshipman Robert T. Spence, was a prisoner in Tripoli. The brother of Midshipman Joseph Bainbridge, Captain William Bainbridge, also was a prisoner in Tripoli, and was nearly killed by a heavy shot that struck the Bashaw's castle. It is said that several other men in the American squadron also had relatives who were prisoners in Tripoli, and the Bashaw kept them in his castle and took pains to inform Captain Preble of that fact, hoping it would divert shot to other parts of the town. But Captain Bainbridge wrote, through the assistance of Mr. Nissen, urging the Americans to fire at the Bashaw's castle, as that was the best means of annoying him and bringing him to terms.

While the bombardment was in progress a sail hove in sight, which proved to be a large man-of-war, and soon afterward it showed a square blue flag with a red cross on it, which was the signal of the 28-gun frigate *John Adams*, Master-Commandant Isaac Chauncey, bringing news of the promotion of Decatur to be captain, and Lieutenants Stewart, Hull, Smith and Somers to be masters-commandant. Captain Preble was advised of re-enforcements consisting of four frigates, under Captain Samuel Barron, which would arrive shortly. This determined him to postpone further attack until the arrival of his successor. On the 16th, the squadron being in great need of water, the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Thomas Robinson, was sent to Malta for a supply. At three o'clock on the afternoon of August 9th Captain Preble went aboard the *Argus*, and while she was standing in toward the town for the purpose of reconnoitering the state of the defenses, the enemy opened an animated fire, and one of their heaviest shot struck the brig about three feet short of the water line, raked the copper off her bottom under water and cut the plank half through.

After vainly waiting two weeks for the relief squadron, Captain Preble on the night of the 24th advanced to the third attack. In this engagement the *John Adams* was of little service, as she had left her gun carriages to be forwarded in the other ships. By 2 A. M., August 25th, the smaller vessels had secured their positions and opened fire. The *Constitution* was unable to get in range for lack of wind, and at break of day the ships withdrew, having sustained little injury, and, as it afterward appeared, caused less. The shells used during these bombardments, purchased at Messina, proved to be of very inferior quality. Captain Bainbridge, in his journal, records that out of the forty-eight shells thrown on the 7th, only one exploded. Captain Preble afterward discovered that many of the bombs had had lead poured into the fuses,

which was supposed to have been done by French agents in Sicily, as the bombs were originally purchased to resist an expected French invasion.

These spirited attacks, however, had such a salutary effect on the Bashaw's resentment against the Americans that he now reduced his demand for ransom to five hundred dollars a man, or half of his figures on the 7th of the same month. Captain Preble rejected the terms, and on the 28th prepared for a still more vigorous attack. While the larger vessels were to engage the batteries, the eight gunboats, under Captain Decatur, were to direct their attention to the thirteen Tripolitan galleys, gunboats Nos. 2 and 3 on this occasion being commanded by Lieutenant Charles Gordon of the marines and Sailing-Master Brooks of the *Argus*. After taking their places within pistol shot of the rocks on the night of August 28th, the larger gunboats, at three o'clock in the morning of the 29th, opened a heavy fire, covered by the *Siren*, Master-Commandant Charles Stewart; the *Argus*, Master-Commandant Isaac Hull; the *Vixen*, Master-Commandant John Smith; the *Nautilus*, Lieutenant Reed; and the *Enterprise*, Lieutenant Thomas Robinson. The attack on the galleys was made with great spirit, and one of them was sunk, two were compelled to run ashore, and the others were put to a disorderly flight. On the approach of day Captain Decatur's flotilla was signaled to retire, while the *Constitution* ran within musket shot of the mole to cover the retreat. Here the frigate remained three quarters of an hour, pouring in a tremendous fire of more than three hundred round shot, besides sweeping the parapets with grape and canister. The gunboats having reached a place of safety, Captain Preble retired to his anchorage.

The enemy suffered heavily in this attack. A large galliot belonging to Tunis was sunk at the mole, while the Tripolitan galleys and gunboats were badly cut

up and lost many men. The gunboats, after the flight of the galleys, ran close up to the town and fired upward of four hundred round shot, while the *Constitution's* cannonading so demoralized the Turks that their fire was ineffectual. The *Constitution* had several shot through her sails, and a few shrouds, stays, trusses, chains and lifts of the main yard were carried away, while grapeshot struck different parts of her hull. None of the seamen, however, were injured. A boat belonging to the *John Adams*, manned by Master's-Mate John Orde Creighton and eight men, while in tow of the *Nautilus*, was sunk by a double-head-



Port of Tripoli.

ed shot, which killed three men and severely wounded one. The only injury that the gunboats received was in their sails.

For about a week after this attack the squadron was deterred from resuming the bombardment by unfavorable winds, but at 2.30 P. M. on the 3d of September the gunboats, under the command of Captain Decatur and Master-Commandant Richard Somers, were ordered to engage the Tripolitan flotilla. The latter opened a hot fire on the advancing Americans until within musket shot, when the Tripolitan vessels fled. The *Constitution* made for the batteries, and when

within grapeshot distance opened her broadside against the enemy's seventy guns. After firing three hundred round shot and sweeping the batteries with grape and canister, Captain Preble signaled the boats to withdraw, and soon followed them. In this attack about fifty shells and four hundred round shot, besides grape and canister, were fired at the enemy. The frigate suffered heavily in her rigging, but nothing larger than a grapeshot struck her hull. The bombards and gunboats also sustained considerable damage, chiefly in their rigging. Sailing-Master Trippe resumed the command of gunboat No. 6, and Midshipman Charles Morris had charge of gunboat No. 3. Gunboat No. 1 became so leaky as to require constant baling, while every shroud was carried away. Although in the attacks that were made after the arrival of the *John Adams* that ship was unable to participate for want of gun carriages, yet Master-Commandant Chauncey and his men were actively engaged in the *Constitution* and gave valuable assistance.

While these spirited attacks were being made, the ketch *Intrepid*, in which Decatur had made his celebrated capture of the *Philadelphia*, had been fitted up as a floating mine with a view of sending her into the harbor and exploding her in the midst of the Tripolitan shipping. She was stripped of every incumbrance, and a room in her hold just forward of her principal mast was planked up and filled with one hundred barrels of powder in bulk, while on the deck immediately above were placed one hundred 9-inch shells and fifty 13½-inch shells, besides a quantity of shot, kentledge and pieces of iron. Communicating with this powder was a tube leading to a room aft which was filled with combustibles that would burn fiercely, thus frightening off boarders by the apprehension of an immediate explosion. In order to prevent the enemy from firing on the ketch while she was entering the harbor, it was intended to give her the appearance of a

blockade runner. Two of the best rowing boats in the squadron were placed aboard her for the purpose of bringing the men out after the fire had been started.

Captain Preble was fully aware of the hazardous nature of the enterprise, and for that reason he personally superintended every detail of the preparations, selecting only officers of tried ability and good judgment. The exploit of Decatur in cutting out the frigate *Philadelphia* and the hand-to-hand encounters with the Mussulmans, together with the dash and energy of Preble himself, had raised the spirit of the officers in the American squadron to the highest point of chivalrous daring, so that when volunteers were called for the officers and men eagerly pressed forward from all sides. Master-Commandant Richard Somers, who had led one of the divisions of gunboats in the several attacks on the enemy, was selected to command the ketch, while Midshipman Henry Wadsworth (an uncle of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the poet, who was named for him) was selected as second in command. With two such gallant officers it was thought unnecessary to allow more to embark in the ketch except ten seamen to man her; but at the last moment Midshipman Joseph Israel, who had pleaded in vain to be permitted to join the company, managed to get aboard unobserved, and when discovered he was allowed to remain. Four seamen from the *Nautilus* and six from the *Constitution* were selected from the volunteers to man the ketch. Their names were: James Simms, Thomas Tompline, James Harris and William Keith, of the *Nautilus;* William Harrison, Robert Clark, Hugh McCormick, Jacob Williams, Peter Penner and Isaac W. Downes, of the *Constitution.*

A few days before the ketch started Captain Preble was trying a port fire in the cabin of the *Constitution* in the presence of several officers, when one of their number, who was timing the fuse with his watch, remarked that it burned too long and might enable the

enemy to board and extinguish it before it ignited the magazine. Hearing the remark, Master-Commandant Somers quietly said, "I ask for no port fire at all." This incident, together with the fact that he had expressed a determination not to be taken alive by the Turks, nor to allow the ketch with her ammunition to fall into the hands of the enemy, plainly indicates the spirit with which these men went into the enterprise.

All the arrangements for the undertaking having been completed the expedition only awaited favorable weather. Once or twice the *Intrepid* started out on her desperate mission but came back on account of the lightness of the air. The night of September 4th came on with a heavy mist covering the sea, but in the lighter haze above the stars were visible, and the minarets of the mosques and the loftier buildings of Tripoli could be made out. Orders were given to make ready to sail. Conscious of the desperate nature of the expedition, Somers gave the men who had volunteered their services a last chance to withdraw, saying that he wished no man to accompany him who would not prefer being blown up to being taken alive. The boat's crew gave three cheers by way of an answer, and each man in turn asked to have the "honor" of applying the match. Before starting on their hazardous journey each of the seamen disposed of his personal effects among his shipmates as if he were at the point of death. Many officers visited Somers in the ketch just before he got under way, among them being Captain Stephen Decatur and Master-Commandant Charles Stewart. Decatur, Stewart and Somers, each about twenty-five years old, were all Philadelphia-bred sailors and had been unusually intimate in their professional careers. They all felt the seriousness of the hour, and what few words were interchanged were spoken in a low tone. Somers, in whom centered the chief interest, was tranquil and grave. When this trio of young officers was about to separate, Somers took a ring from his finger,

and breaking it into three pieces gave each of his companions a part and retained the third himself. Just before night closed in, three of the Tripolitan gunboats were seen to anchor within the western entrance, through which the *Intrepid* was to pass, and Decatur admonished Somers to look out for them lest they board him before he gained the desired position in the harbor. Somers quietly replied that the Turks had become so shy that he thought they would be more likely to cut and run than advance to meet him.

At eight o'clock in the evening the ketch got under way with a fine leading breeze from the east. She was accompanied by the *Argus*, the *Vixen* and the *Nautilus*, the last being Somers' own vessel, and shortly afterward the *Siren* weighed anchor by the special order of Captain Preble and stood toward the northern passage, through which the ketch was to enter the harbor, so as to assist in picking up the returning boats.

Arriving off the northern entrance the men in the ketch bade adieu to their comrades and boldly stood out into the harbor. The last man in the squadron to hold communication with Master-Commandant Somers was First-Lieutenant George W. Reed, of the *Nautilus*. The haze hanging over the sea finally swallowed up the ketch like the mystery that afterward enshrouded the fate of these adventurers. Her outlines became indistinct, and finally her shadowy form melted into the surrounding gloom. Every eye in the little vessels watching outside the rocks was strained on the spot where the sails of the ketch vanished into obscurity, and so great was the anxiety of the men that many thought they could still make her out, though this was probably the effect of imagination. Midshipman Ridgeley, of the *Nautilus*, which ship was nearest to the rocks, followed the ketch with the aid of a night glass to the end, but he could not distinguish more than her outlines. In order to get some clew to the movements of the ketch many of the watchers leaned over the

sides of the vessel, holding lights near the surface of the sea, and at the same time placing their ears close to the water's edge in the hope that they might catch some sound which would reveal her whereabouts. The silence soon became so oppressive that the watchers found themselves breathing with difficulty, and the sweat of anxiety started from every pore, while each heart throbbed with unaccustomed violence. The faintest ripple of the water against the sides of the vessel was eagerly caught at as being the sound of boats returning with the adventurers, while every splash of the waves against the bows or the chafing of the cables in the hawse-holes was thought to be the sound of muffled oars. By way of relieving the unendurable suspense the watchers began to pass the question, "Have you heard anything yet?" but always with the same indefinite answer.

At last the distant report of a cannon proclaimed that the alarm had been given. This was followed by a rapid discharge of artillery, and soon the brilliant flashes of guns and the continuous roar of heavy ordnance announced that every battery was making its angry protest against the stranger's approach. So great had been the anxiety of the watchers, that many of them afterward declared that it was several hours between the time the ketch was lost to view and the sound of the first gun, although in reality it was not more than a few minutes. The cannonading afforded a welcome relief, but owing to the direction of the guns it gave no indication of the position of the ketch.

About ten o'clock, while Master-Commandant Stewart and Lieutenant Carrol were standing at the *Siren's* gangway gazing intently into the night, the latter suddenly exclaimed, "Look! See the light!" and far out in the night a dim light was seen moving in a waving line, as if some one were running along the deck of a vessel with a ship's lantern in his hand. It paused for a moment and then dropped out of sight, as if the

bearer had descended into a hatchway, again leaving the watchers staring into the night. An instant later a sheet of fierce flame leaped heavenward, followed by a terrific explosion. The night of Egyptian darkness had changed to the brilliancy of the midday sun, blinding the beholders, while the ships quivered from truck to keel. The sublime spectacle reached its climax. The column of flame vibrated a moment, and in a twinkling had vanished, and with the exception of a few shells that flashed across the sky, left the awe-stricken beholders in a darkness of twofold intensity. The deafening roar of the batteries and the noise of the explosion had suddenly ceased, and in the profound hush that followed each man stood mute with horror. Soon the rattling of shot, shell and the fragments of the wreck could be heard falling on the rocks in the harbor or splashing the water near by, while far off in the distance a few cries arose from the city, but this soon ceased, leaving a deep and unbroken silence.

If the Americans in the offing had been anxious before the explosion, they were doubly so now. Every eye was strained with renewed effort, every ear eagerly caught at the faintest sound, and with increasing frequency came the question, "Have you heard anything yet?" During all this dark night the vessels hovered around the northern entrance in the vain hope of picking up some of the survivors. The heavier frigates tacked back and forth from one entrance to the other, occasionally firing a gun or a rocket for the guidance of any possible fugitive, but in the depressing silence the cannon sounded like minute guns for the dead; and well might they have been, for the sound fell on ears that heard not, while eyes that should have seen the rockets were sightless forever.

At dawn the Americans closely scanned the harbor for traces of the *Intrepid*. On the rocks which formed the northern entrance of the harbor, through which the ketch passed, was seen the wreck of a mast, and

scattered around on the other side were fragments of vessels. It was soon discovered that one of the enemy's largest gunboats was missing, while two others badly shattered were being hauled up on shore for repairs. As the three gunboats that had been stationed at this entrance of the harbor crowded with soldiers had disappeared, it was thought that one of them had been sunk and the other two were so injured as to require running ashore to prevent sinking. It was afterward known that the ketch grounded on the north side of the rocks,[1] and, as she was attacked by the three gunboats on guard there, it is believed that Somers, in keeping with his avowed determination not to be taken alive by the enemy, and to prevent this valuable supply of ammunition from falling into their hands, took a ship's lantern and, descending directly into the magazine room, deliberately fired the entire mass, blowing up his own men and the Tripolitans who were swarming over the ketch.

Two bodies mangled beyond possibility of recognition were found in the bottom of the ketch, and on the 6th of September four more were discovered floatin the harbor or on the rocks. Six more bodies had been found the day after the explosion, and some time afterward the *Constitution's* gig, which had been sent in with the ketch, was found on the beach where it had drifted, with another body in it. These bodies were collected and laid on the beach, and on the 8th of September Captain Bainbridge and some of the American officers in Tripoli were permitted to view them. He describes them as being in a "most mangled and burned condition," and "from the whole of them being so disfigured it was impossible to recognize any feature known to us, or even to distinguish an officer from a seaman." One of the bodies had the remains of nankeen trousers on it, while the hair of the head was

[1] See A in diagram of Tripoli harbor, p. 257.

of deep black, and as Somers was the only one of the party that answered to this description it was probable that these were his remains. A number of the bodies were riddled with grapeshot, but as the two found in the bottom of the ketch were uninjured in this respect it was thought that they were below at the time the attack was made and fired the magazine. The remains were buried on the beach, outside the town, near the walls, while small stones marked their graves; but these modest tombstones were removed by the Turks, who objected to Christian monuments in their land.

Thus perished Richard Somers, Henry Wadsworth, and Joseph Israel, three as courageous young officers as ever drew a sword. Their names have passed into the annals of the navy as synonyms of all that is heroic. Congress passed a resolution of sympathy for the relatives of Richard Somers, Henry Wadsworth, James Decatur, James R. Caldwell, Joseph Israel and John Sword Dorsey, all of whom were killed before Tripoli.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCLUSION OF THE WAR WITH TRIPOLI.

The experiences of the American seamen during the nineteen months of their captivity in Tripoli were not pleasant. The Tripolitans at first were disposed to treat the prisoners with leniency, but the American tars held their captors in such contempt, and so frequently came to blows with them, that the Turkish guards soon looked upon the sailors from the New World as incorrigible scamps, on whom kindness was thrown away. The carpenters, riggers and sailmakers were employed in repairing the Bashaw's gunboats, while the seamen were compelled to work on the fortifications with other slaves, and having nothing to eat but black bread and olive oil they soon became emaciated and feeble. "The sailors were put to work carrying stones on their heads and shoulders to repair the fortifications; and at this laborious employment they were kept from morning till night, exposed to the burning sun and supplied with very insufficient rations. Instead of beef, tough camel's meat was served out to them, and the bread was a miserable article, composed of beans instead of wheat."[1] At the solicitation of Captain Bainbridge, a supply of salt provisions and clothing was sent to them from the American squadron. By doing overtime work the men made a little money and were permitted to walk about the streets, two or three at a time. But with the money thus acquired Jack was tempted to drown his sorrows in liq-

[1] Memoirs of Commodore David Porter, p. 62.

uor, which could only be obtained from the Jew shops; and as there is no sight so offensive to the Mussulmans as a drunken man, they gave expression to their disgust by spitting in his face. As the American sailor was frequently intoxicated, he was subjected to this indignity on more than one occasion, but in every instance he gave the offender a sound thrashing. The disturbance being reported to the slave guards, Jack would be sentenced to receive the bastinado. In receiving this punishment he was favored by the slave driver, who, instead of delivering the blows on the bare feet, interposed straw pads, so that practically Jack got off free; but in order that the deception might not be discovered, Jack was instructed to yell right lustily, so that the chief slave driver, whose high office and dignity would not permit him to witness the punishment of a common sailor, but who never failed to listen outside, might be satisfied that the punishment was properly administered.

Several attempts were made by the American officers to escape from their captivity. As the castle was near the harbor, it was thought possible to reach the American squadron if boats could be procured, and the officers began to dig a tunnel under the castle, but they had not proceeded far when they discovered that the distance—seventy or eighty feet—would be too great, and would lead under the water that washed the outer walls of the castle. They also discovered that sentinels were stationed along the beach for several miles on both sides of the city, so that it would have been impossible for boats from the squadron to approach unobserved.

On one of the dreary nights of their imprisonment in the castle Captain Bainbridge and Lieutenant Jacob Jones opened a passage in the wall that led into a deserted apartment, where they discovered that the upper floor had been broken through. With great difficulty one of the officers climbed into the room above, in

which there was an iron-grated window overlooking the ramparts of the castle. In the course of several days the iron bars of this window were cut through, and selecting a dark, stormy night, the prisoners made a rope of their shirts and trousers, passed through the window, lowered themselves to the ramparts, and crawling along in the shadow of the walls reached a point where they intended to lower themselves into the sea and swim to a small armed vessel which had come into the port several days before. Just as they were approaching the cannon to which it was intended to tie one end of the rope, the relief guard approached, and the adventurers were compelled to retreat, which they did without detection. It was fortunate that the project was thus interrupted, for they afterward discovered that the vessel to which they intended to swim had sailed early in the evening.

A few months after this failure the American officers determined to make an attempt to escape to a British frigate that was expected in a few days. In order to do this they began, about the last of June, 1804, to dig a tunnel under the castle, but while excavating under the ramparts they reached a vault which became so weakened that it caved in under the weight of a 42-pound cannon which the Turkish guards were moving at the time. Even this did not seem to arouse the suspicions of their captors. It was as well, however, that the tunnel was not completed, for the British frigate, instead of coming into the harbor, hove to in the offing only long enough for the English consul to come aboard.

The tropical heat of the summer rendered the air in the prison foul and unendurable, and as no attention was paid to the frequent requests for better ventilation, Lieutenant David Porter succeeded in removing the stone and mortar from a window which had been filled in. When the chief slave driver saw the opening he rushed into the apartment, seized Lieuten-

ant Porter, and had him removed to a filthy room in a distant part of the castle.

The American seamen also matured several plans for escape, one of which they managed to communicate to Captain Bainbridge, and it met his approval. They proposed to await a favorable moment and then make a rush in a body to the castle, overpower the guards, liberate their officers, and then make an attack on the palace, and having secured the Bashaw and his family, they were to hold them as hostages for their safe conduct to Captain Preble's squadron. But after his experience with American daring in the loss of the *Philadelphia* and the explosion of the ketch *Intrepid*, the Bashaw had become exceedingly nervous about his three hundred American prisoners. The guards at all places were doubled, while the carpenters, boatswains, sailmakers and master's mates were separated from the seamen and placed in a secure apartment in the castle.

On the 5th of September, 1804, the weather becoming unusually threatening, the guns, mortars and shells were taken out of the smaller vessels, as it was feared that they would be swamped, and on the 7th the *John Adams*, the *Siren*, the *Nautilus*, the *Enterprise* and the *Scourge* took the gunboats and bombards in tow and sailed for Syracuse, leaving the *Constitution*, the *Argus* and the *Vixen* to blockade the port of Tripoli. On the 10th of September Captain Samuel Barron, in the 44-gun frigate *President*, Master-Commandant George Cox, with the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, Captain Hugh George Campbell (Midshipman Oliver Hazard Perry being in the latter), arrived on the scene of action to assume command. Two days later two coasters laden with sixteen thousand bushels of wheat were intercepted while attempting to run into the port. Captain Preble now returned to the United States in the *John Adams*, where he arrived on the 26th of February, 1805, and Congress voted him a gold medal for his brilliant services.

In the meantime the Government continued to increase the naval force in the Mediterranean, and also sent over two bombards, the *Vengeance* and the *Spitfire*, besides ten gunboats, which had been constructed especially for service in the Mediterranean. The navigation of these small craft across the stormy Atlantic was a feat requiring no little daring and skill. The *Vengeance* was taken across by Lieutenant Lewis and the *Spitfire* by Lieutenant McNiell. The gunboats were brought over by Lieutenants James Lawrence, Maxwell and Elbert, and by Midshipmen Izard, J. D. Henley, Harrison, Harriden and Carter. Gunboat No. 7, commanded by Lieutenant Peter Ogelvie, sailed from New York May 14, 1805, but springing her mast returned for repairs. She sailed again on the 20th of June, but since that time she has not been heard from. The fate of this gunboat only too plainly showed what great risk the men who commanded and manned the other vessels of its class took when they sailed across the Atlantic in them. Eight of these boats, although sailing separately from the United States, arrived at Gibraltar within forty-eight hours of one another. Gunboat No. 6, Lieutenant James Lawrence (afterward the hero of the *Hornet-Peacock* fight), when near the Azores, fell in with the British frigate *Lapwing*, Captain Upton, which had run down on her supposing she was a raft with a number of shipwrecked men aboard. When off Cadiz, June 12th, the same gunboat was boarded by a boat from Admiral Collingwood's fleet and three of her men were impressed.

At the time Captain Samuel Barron arrived in the Mediterranean the American naval force was the strongest that had ever been collected under the flag of the United States. It consisted of the 44-gun frigate *President* (flagship), Master-Commandant Cox; the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, Captain Stephen Decatur; the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, Captain John Rodgers; the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, Captain Hugh George Camp-

bell; the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, Captain James Barron; the 16-gun brig *Siren*, Master-Commandant Charles Stewart; the 16-gun brig *Argus*, Master-Commandant Isaac Hull; the 12-gun schooner *Vixen*, Master-Commandant John Smith; the 12-gun schooner *Nautilus*, Master-Commandant John Herbert Dent; the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*, Master-Commandant Robinson; the 10-gun sloop *Hornet*, Lieutenant Samuel Evans; besides the bombards and gunboats. The *Hornet* was a vessel purchased at Malta and altered for the service.

While the Americans were thus preparing to continue the war with greater vigor than ever, trouble began in the enemy's camp. It is to be remembered that Captain Bainbridge was aware of the strong feeling among the Tripolitans against Jussuf Karamauli, the reigning Bashaw of Tripoli, who had usurped the throne of his brother Hamet and held his children as hostages, and it was not long before advantage was taken of this circumstance. William Eaton, the American consul at Tunis, persuaded the ex-Bashaw to raise an army and in co-operation with the American squadron to attack Tripoli. Mr. Eaton, who had served in the army during the Revolution, volunteered his services as leader of the land forces. On the 26th of November, 1804, the *Argus*, Master-Commandant Isaac Hull, repaired to the old port of Alexandria, where Hamet had assembled the army. This "army" proved to be a rabble of thirty thousand unarmed and destitute adventurers, who swarmed to a standard that gave promise of pillage and plunder. Picking out twelve hundred men, most of them Christians, Mr. Eaton, early in the spring of 1805, marched across the desert of Barca for Derne, the capital of the richest province in Tripoli. A few miles from this place he found the *Argus*, the *Nautilus* and the *Hornet*. A field piece and a body of marines under First-Lieutenant Presley N. O'Bannon and Midshipman George Mann were landed, together with arms, ammunition

and provisions. The dispositions for an attack were soon made, and on the 27th of April they advanced to the assault. The vessels ran close to the batteries, and after an hour of spirited cannonading, silenced them. In two hours the place was occupied and the enemy subdued, and for the first time in its history the flag of the United States floated over a fortress of the Old World. This was the fifteen-star-and-fifteen-stripe flag which had been in use since 1795. Fourteen of the assailants were killed or wounded, among the latter being Mr. Eaton, who was shot through his waist.

Hamet Karamauli now asked for another supply of arms and ammunition in order to follow up his advantage by an immediate attack on Tripoli, but this Captain Samuel Barron refused, on the ground that the deposed Bashaw was now in possession of half the regency, and if he had the influence over the people which he professed to have he could easily conquer the remaining half without further augmentation of his forces. On the 22d of May, Captain Barron, on account of his poor health, transferred the command of the American squadron to Captain John Rodgers. In the meantime Jussuf Karamauli, finding that his situation was growing critical, and that the Americans were increasing rather than diminishing in strength, came to terms. On the 3d of June he signed a treaty by which he relinquished all claims to tribute in the future, and upon the exchange of the Tripolitan prisoners the remaining American captives were to be ransomed for sixty thousand dollars. These terms were undoubtedly the best that could be expected under the circumstances. The exiled Bashaw did not develop the popularity and strength which were promised, and he remained a pensioner of the United States for two years afterward, receiving two hundred dollars a month.

While the Americans were engaged in the bombardment of Tripoli the Bey of Tunis took the opportunity to manifest his hostility toward the United

States. This ruler, like the other potentates of Barbary, undoubtedly was encouraged in these unfriendly acts by agents of the British Government,[1] for the American commercial marine had by this time grown to such proportions as to prove a dangerous rival to Great Britain. These agents had given the Bey such assurances of the insignificance of the United States that he had come to regard the Americans as being only too anxious to maintain peace with the "terrible" regencies of Barbary, and he supposed a little expression of his wrath at a time when this "unimportant nation" of the New World was struggling with his neighbor would conduce to his good. Accordingly he told Mr. Davis, the American consul at Tunis, that unless the Tunisian corsair that had been captured, while attempting to run the blockade, by the squadron before Tripoli was returned, he would declare war.

But the Bey chose a most unfortunate moment for his bravado. The American squadron had grown to the size of a respectable fleet, while the officers had become thoroughly organized and trained; and, flushed with their victories off Tripoli, nothing would have suited them better than "a brush" with Tunis. On the 1st of August Captain John Rodgers appeared off Tunis with thirteen vessels of war, and, promptly sending for the American consul, he informed the Bey in the plainest possible manner that he would give him just thirty-six hours in which to answer to the terms of peace proposed by Captain Rodgers. The Bey at first seemed dazed by this unexpected bearing of the "new nation in the West," but Captain Rodgers quickly brought him to a realization of the situation, and literally dictated the terms of peace under the muzzles of his cannon. In September a Tunisian minister embarked in the *Congress*, Captain Stephen Decatur, and in due time was landed at Washington.

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[1] See p. 218.

The result of the visit of this squadron to Tunis astonished the representatives of the different European powers residing there; the general remark was, "No other nation has ever negotiated with the present Bey on such honorable terms."

A few hours after leaving Algeciras on her homeward passage, the *President* was fired on by Spanish gunboats, and some of their shot passed over the frigate. As the gunboats were anchored in the harbor so that it was impossible for the *President* to get at them, and as the Spaniards were probably mistaken as to the nationality of the frigate, the only notice taken of the incident was the display of the Spanish flag under the *President's* colors.

Thus the young republic, by means of its navy, threw off the ignoble yoke of the piratical States of Barbary, and frustrated the intrigues of Great Britain against the development of our commerce in the Mediterranean and in the Atlantic. The other powers of Europe some years later compelled these regencies to give up all claim of tribute on Christendom. The four years of active service in the Mediterranean proved of great benefit to the infant navy of the United States. The officers and men acquired that practical training and discipline which active service alone can give. It rendered them self-reliant, and developed their aptitude for the sea to an astonishing degree, as will be seen in succeeding chapters.

PART THIRD.

THE WAR OF 1812.

CHAPTER I.

THE OUTBREAK.

About eighteen months after the signing of the treaties with the Bashaw of Tripoli and the Bey of Tunis, an incident occurred off the coast of Virginia which again brought the navy into prominence. The 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake*, Master-Commandant Charles Gordon, had been put into commission for the purpose of relieving the *Constitution*, then stationed in the Mediterranean. In the spring of 1807, while the *Chesapeake* was completing her outfit at the navy yard in Washington, the English minister informed the Government that three sailors had deserted from the British frigate *Melampus* and were enrolled in the *Chesapeake's* crew. In keeping with the custom existing between friendly powers, Master-Commandant Gordon ordered an investigation. One of the deserters declared that he was a native of the Eastern Shore, and as Mr. Gordon himself had lived there he was satisfied with the man's statement. The second deserter was a negro, and no question was entertained on the part of the *Chesapeake's* officers as to his right to American protection. Concerning the third there seems to have been no conclusive evidence on either side, but the man stoutly maintained that he was an American citizen. All the deserters reiterated that they had been forced into the British service; and as the English officers had no proof to the contrary, and as two out of the three were unquestionably entitled to American protection, the British minister was informed that none of them would be given up. This

answer was thought to be satisfactory, as nothing further was said on the subject.

On the 22d of June, 1807, the *Chesapeake* was ready for sea. Getting under way at eight o'clock in the morning, she dropped down to Hampton Roads and made sail for the Mediterranean, bearing the broad pennant of Captain James Barron. At the moment the *Chesapeake* was seen to be weighing anchor, the British 50-gun ship *Leopard*, Captain Humphreys, which had been lying at Lynnhaven for some days, also got under way and preceded the American frigate to sea by several miles. By noon the ships were stretching out to clear the land, and at three o'clock they were forty-five miles from port. The *Chesapeake* then tacked to the northeast, when the *Leopard*—which had been allowing the *Chesapeake* to come up with her—being to windward, bore up and ran close abeam of the American. Captain Humphreys then hailed, saying he had dispatches which he desired to have taken to Europe, and in a few minutes a boat was lowered and sent aboard the *Chesapeake*. So far nothing unusual had occurred, as it was customary for vessels of war to extend this courtesy to each other. On gaining the *Chesapeake's* deck the British lieutenant was conducted to the cabin, where he handed Captain James Barron an order, signed by Vice-Admiral Berkeley, dated June 1, 1807, directing all commanders in his (Berkeley's) squadron to board the *Chesapeake* wherever found on the high seas, and to "require to search for deserters" and "to proceed to search for the same." In the same order Vice-Admiral Berkeley extended a similar privilege to American officers when searching for deserters. In this arrogant assumption of authority Vice-Admiral Berkeley, without the sanction of his Government, not only presumed to institute a radical innovation in that most delicate of all legal subjects, international law, but proceeded in an arbitrary way to carry out his views in this case without so much as

informing the American authorities of his dissatisfaction.

The *Chesapeake* at this moment was in great disorder. Her men were still engaged in stowing away cables, while the decks were encumbered with cabin furniture, personal effects, provisions, chicken coops etc.—certainly a most disgraceful condition for a man-of-war on the high seas. Captain Barron sent a note to the commander of the *Leopard*, in which he refused to permit the search; and when the British lieutenant returned with this note, Captain Barron gave orders to clear for action. The word was easily given, but it was soon found impossible to be carried out, for even the rammers, wads, matches, gunlocks and powder horns could not be produced. In the meantime Captain Barron stood at the gangway, watching the British boat pulling back to the *Leopard*. In five minutes the note was read, when Captain Humphreys hailed. Captain Barron replied that he did not understand, upon which a shot flew just ahead of the *Chesapeake's* bow. As the American frigate did not obey this summons to heave to, a broadside was poured into her, which wounded several men, including the captain.

For fifteen minutes the *Leopard*, at short range and in smooth water, fired broadside after broadside into the unresisting *Chesapeake*, for the latter, owing to the confusion of her stores and armament, could not discharge a single gun. Captain Barron begged that at least one gun might be fired in defense before he surrendered, and just as the flag was coming down Lieutenant William Henry Allen, who commanded the second division, seized a live coal from the galley fire with his fingers and discharged a gun. The shot hulled the *Leopard*, but did no further damage. The cannonading then ceased, and a boat put out to board the *Chesapeake*. Out of her crew of three hundred and seventy-five she had lost three killed and eight

een wounded. Twenty-one shot had hulled her, all the masts were wounded, and the sails were riddled with grape and canister. Several British officers then boarded her, and, mustering the crew, picked out the three men who had left the *Melampus*—William Ware, Daniel Martin (colored) and John Strachan—besides Jenkin Ratford, or John Wilson, as he is called in some accounts, who had left the English cruiser *Halifax*, and carried them aboard the *Leopard*, all the men maintaining to the last that they were American citizens. Captain Barron informed the British commander that he considered the *Chesapeake* a prize of the *Leopard;* but Captain Humphreys refused to look at it in that light, and, after securing his four prisoners, sailed away. Captain Barron then put back to Hampton Roads.

The news of this outrage caused great excitement throughout the United States. It had been the practice of British cruisers to hover round American ports for the purpose of boarding vessels and searching for alleged English seamen. Not only were coasting vessels thus made liable to a reduction in their crews, but American ships on the open sea, wherever found, were brought to, their crews, never too numerous, were inspected, and such as in the estimation of the British officer were English deserters were forcibly carried off, thus leaving the merchant ship in midocean bereft of her best seamen and with her crew dangerously weakened. By 1812 over six thousand cases of impressed American seamen were registered in Washington while even Lord Castlereagh, in a speech before Parliament, February 18, 1811, admitted that "out of one hundred and forty-five thousand seamen employed in the British service in January, 1811, the whole number claiming to be American subjects amounted to no more than three thousand three hundred."[1]

[1] See Records of Parliament.

But British cruisers did not stop at this. Any American vessel laden with a cargo that British commanders suspected of being intended for the enemies of England was ordered out of her course into some port, and was there unloaded and searched. This frequently resulted in the confiscation of American cargoes for the benefit of the British exchequer, and always entailed a serious loss of time to the merchant. The War of 1812 adjusted these difficulties, although not by treaty stipulation, but, even before that, many English officers denounced the practice as unjust. In his private journal Lord Dundonald says: "On our arrival at Halifax we found many American vessels which had been detained, laden with corn [wheat] and provisions. These had been seized by our predecessors on the station, the act by no means tending to increase our popularity on subsequent visits along the United States coasts. Another practice which was pursued here always appeared to me a questionable stretch of authority toward a neutral nation, viz., the forcible detention of English seamen whenever found navigating American ships. Of this the Government of the United States justly complained, as inflicting severe losses on its citizens, whose vessels were thus delayed or imperiled for want of hands."

On the 25th of April, 1806, the British 50-gun ship *Leander*, Captain Whitby, while cruising off New York harbor for the purpose of intercepting American merchant ships and depleting their crews, had endeavored to bring to a small coasting vessel. Her master, knowing that this meant the abduction of some of his men, gave no heed to the summons and attempted to gain the harbor. The *Leander* thereupon fired a shot at the coaster, which killed her commander, John Pierce, but the Americans kept on their course and reached port. On the 17th of April, 1806, a memorial of the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of the city of New York, signed by De Witt Clinton, was for-

warded to the President, which said that "our port is blockaded, our vessels intercepted, our seamen impressed, our commerce interrupted and our jurisdictional rights most grossly violated. A British squadron is now before our harbor, evincing a disposition to renew its outrages and to perpetrate additional enormities. We therefore respectfully request that a naval force may be immediately stationed at this port, and that three or more American frigates may without delay be sent for our protection." By an act of Congress, April, 1806, the list of captains in the United States navy was increased to fourteen, masters-commandant to eight, lieutenants to seventy-two. The captains under this law were Samuel Nicholson, Alexander Murray, Samuel Barron, John Rodgers, Edward Preble, James Barron, William Bainbridge, Hugh G. Campbell, Stephen Decatur, Thomas Tingey, Charles Stewart, Isaac Hull, John Shaw and Isaac Chauncey. The masters-commandant were: John Smith, George Cox, John Herbert Dent, Thomas Robinson, David Porter, John Cassin, Samuel Evans and Charles Gordon.

The American people had not yet forgotten the outrage on the *Baltimore* in 1798, when the United States and England were attacking a common enemy. In proportion as these abuses were persisted in, the indignation of the people grew apace, until the news of the attack on the *Chesapeake* wrought the nation to the highest degree of exasperation. The prompt action of the cabinet at Westminster, disavowing the act of Vice-Admiral Berkeley, alone prevented an immediate declaration of war. Of the three deserters from the *Melampus*, seized in the *Chesapeake*, two (the third having died) were returned on board the latter with indemnity money and much formality. The fourth man—Jenkin Ratford, or John Wilson, who had deserted from the *Halifax*—is deserving of further notice. After escaping from the British ship, he met her commander, Lord James Townshend, in the streets of Norfolk. As Lord

James was endeavoring to induce him to re-enter their service, Ratford's anger broke all bounds, and, heaping maledictions on the British officer, he left him to the jeers of the crowd. On the seizure of the four men from the *Chesapeake*, the three men from the *Melampus* were sentenced to receive each five hundred lashes,[1] a punishment little short of the death penalty. But these sentences were not carried into execution, as it was feared that the seizures might be disapproved by the home Government. But the puerile spite of the noble Lord James, smarting under the insults he had received from a common sailor in the streets of Norfolk, could not be appeased until he saw Jenkin Ratford hanged at the fore yardarm of the *Halifax*, before instructions from England could arrive ordering the immediate release and return of the four men.

Captain Barron was tried by court-martial under four charges and was found guilty of the second: "For neglecting, on the probability of an engagement, to clear his ship for action." He was suspended from the service without pay for five years. Master-Commandant Charles Gordon and Captain Hall of the marines, as acting under the orders of a superior officer, escaped with a private reprimand, while the gunner was cashiered. The British ministry recalled Vice-Admiral Berkeley from the command of this station, but soon afterward assigned him to a more important one.

These flagrant violations of neutral rights taught the American people that the dignity of a nation can be maintained only by a respectable showing of force. When they were thus rudely awakened to the fact that even their largest frigates were incapable of resenting insults, they became apprehensive of their defenseless ships, representing a tonnage of two millions, which spread their sails on every sea. The condition

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. iv, p. 255.

of the *Chesapeake* on the 22d of June, 1807, unprepared to vindicate its honor by immediate action, illustrates the humiliation and danger that ever await a nation when its coast defenses and navy are permitted to deteriorate and decay.

On the 18th of December, 1807, Congress authorized the construction of one hundred and eighty-eight additional gunboats, making a total of two hundred and fifty-seven vessels of this class. Four days afterward a law was passed declaring an unlimited embargo on all foreign commerce, and all the war vessels were recalled from the Mediterranean and stationed on the American coasts. In January, 1809, the President was empowered to put into commission the frigates *United States*, *President* and *Essex*, and the corvette *John Adams*, and to increase the naval complement from fourteen hundred and twenty-five to five thousand and twenty-five men and boys. Every officer from this time exercised great care in training his men at the guns and working the ship, and every vessel was kept in the highest state of preparation for immediate action.

While both nations were assuming a belligerent attitude, the British 38-gun frigate *Guerrière*, Captain Samuel John Pechell, while cruising off New York harbor, May 1, 1811, boarded the American brig *Spitfire*, from Portland, bound for New York, and impressed a man named John Deguyo, a passenger and a native citizen of the United States. As a further expression of his arrogance Captain Pechell had caused the name of his frigate to be painted in large letters extending across the entire width of his foretopsail. A few days after the perpetration of this outrage the United States 44-gun frigate *President* was lying at anchor off Fort Severn, Annapolis, bearing the broad pennant of Captain John Rodgers. All about the frigate was quiet and listless; no sounds of warlike preparation could be heard. Her commander was with his family at

Havre de Grace, forty-five miles distant; her chaplain and purser were in Washington, and the sailing-master was at Baltimore, twenty-five miles away; and her senior lieutenant, Charles Ludlow, was dining aboard the brig-of-war *Argus*, anchored near the *President*. About noon the attention of a quartermaster in the *President* was attracted by a gig, five miles distant, pulling down Chesapeake Bay, from the direction of Havre de Grace, at a furious rate. Leveling his glass, he soon made out the captain's broad pennant flying at her bow. The people in the frigate hastened to prepare the ship for the reception of her commander, for Captain Rodgers was one of the strictest disciplinarians in the service.

Soon the gig dashed alongside and Captain Rodgers stepped aboard. He had received orders from Washington to get to sea as soon as possible and search for the *Guerrière*. In an instant all was excitement and bustle aboard the flagship. The general recall cornet was run up at the main and a gun fired. Boats hurriedly put off to and from the shore, and from other vessels thereabout, and preparations were made to sail at the earliest possible moment. At dawn, May 12th, all was ready. Sharp, quick orders were given in rapid succession, which were promptly repeated by the shrill piping of the boatswain's silver whistle. Men rushed about in seeming confusion, the capstan was manned, the music struck up, and the anchor was wrenched from its comfortable bed at the bottom of the river and soon appeared under the bow, muddy and ugly, as if it did not relish this sudden call to action. The topmen scrambled up the shrouds, swung out on the yards, loosened sail after sail amid the merry squeaking of the blocks and the creaking of the yards, as they were braced around; the ship moved forward in dignified majesty, the waters rippled away on both sides in graceful lines, as if starting aback in mild surprise at such unseemly haste, and

almost before the men realized it, the noble frigate was standing down the bay under a cloud of white, bellying sails, the tall masts making stately bows by way of a farewell to those on shore. Stopping on her way down the bay for some of her people who had been left behind, the *President* passed the Capes of Virginia and out into the broad ocean. Learning that the commander of the *Guerrière* had painted the name of his ship on his foresail, Captain Rodgers caused the *President's* name to be placed on each of her three topsails, so that there might be no possible chance of the British frigate mistaking her in case they met.

At noon on the 16th of May, when about forty miles northeast of Cape Henry, a strange vessel was descried on the eastern horizon, which from the squareness of her yards and symmetry of her sails was at once known to be a man-of-war. On discovering the *President* the stranger stood for her under a press of sail. At two o'clock signals were exchanged, but as they were unintelligible the stranger continued on her course around Cape Hatteras. In the meantime the breeze had been dying away, so that it was dark before the *President* drew near.

"From the symmetry of her upper sails," wrote Captain Rodgers, the stranger was thought to be the *Guerrière.* At 8.30 P. M. Captain Rodgers hailed, "What ship is that?" and by way of answer the stranger repeated the question. The *President* again hailed, and this time received a shot in the mainmast. Captain Rodgers then ordered a shot to be fired in return, and this induced the stranger to fire three guns in quick succession, which she followed up with a broadside. The *President* then began firing in earnest, but it was soon perceived that she was engaging a vessel much inferior, both in size and in weight of metal, and when the stranger ceased his fire the *President* also stopped. But the stranger again fired, whereupon the Americans reopened their broadsides. The enemy

soon swung end on, perfectly unmanageable, and Captain Rodgers then drew to windward and remained in the vicinity for the night so as to be of assistance if necessary. At the break of day the stranger was seen to leeward, and the *President* bore down and sent Lieutenant John Orde Creighton aboard with proffers of services. The vessel proved to be the British 22-gun ship *Little Belt*, Captain Arthur Batt Bingham. She had suffered severely from the *President's* fire, and had lost eleven killed and twenty-one wounded. Captain Bingham declined all assistance, whereupon the ships made for their respective stations.

James, in his History of the British Navy, admits that "the act of the *Guerrière* in pressing a native American citizen out of an American coaster, in the very mouth of an American port, was unjustifiable, unnecessary and impolitic; and that this wanton encroachment upon neutral rights, coupled with many others which have been practiced along the same coast, was a sufficient ground for the Government of the United States to take every measure, short of actual war, for protecting its commerce and citizens from the repetition of such acts of violence." The question as to which of these vessels fired the first shot is one of veracity. Investigations were held on both sides, and resulted in diverse verdicts. Every sea officer in the *President*, besides many petty officers, was sworn and examined. The chaplain testified that he felt no jar when the first gun was fired. Such being the case, the first shot could not have been fired from the *President*. The number and respectability of the witnesses examined in the *President* put an end to all doubt, so far as the Americans were concerned, that the *Little Belt* fired the first shot. On the other hand, the British ministry credited Captain Bingham's version of the affair, although it is believed that no thorough official investigation was ever made among the *Little Belt's* officers and men. As no evidence could be adduced

that would settle the dispute, both Governments dropped the matter; but the people of the two countries took up the question with intense bitterness, each placing implicit confidence in the statements of its officers.

Some weeks after this rencounter the 44-gun frigate *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur, while cruising off the harbor of New York for the protection of American seamen, fell in with the British war ships *Eurydice* and *Atalanta*. While the commanders were exchanging hails, a gunner aboard the *United States*, handling the lanyard of his lock, discharged the gun, afterward averring that it was done accidentally; but the circumstances were very suspicious, and Captain Decatur believed that the cannon was fired intentionally with a view of bringing on an action. Fortunately the commanders were cool enough to await explanations before precipitating an engagement. Captain Decatur hastened to apologize for the carelessness of his gunner, and the affair was amicably dismissed; but the incident serves to show the intense feeling then existing between the two nations, and the careful preparation in which the war ships were kept.

In the winter of 1811–'12 a plot, instigated by emissaries of the British Government, for the dismemberment of the American Union, was discovered to the President and Congress. At the same time depredations on American commerce, against which the United States had so long complained, were persisted in; and these repeated outrages, together with the sound principle that respect between nations is mainly based on force and martial capabilities, induced Congress, on the 18th of June, 1812, to declare war against Great Britain. As soon as war was announced American merchants sent a swift sailing pilot boat to northern Europe to warn American merchantmen to remain in the ports of Sweden, Russia, Denmark and Prussia until the cessation of hostilities. By this means a great

number of American vessels was saved from capture. The news of the war aroused much interest in the Bonapartist papers of the day, while the Journal de Paris made the following almost prophetic declaration: "The United States, wearied of the commercial tyranny of England, draws from its scabbard the sword of Washington, which has once already humbled British pride. The efforts of the Americans excite an interest in those who recall with what insulting *hauteur* they have been treated by the English Government, which always considers them as revolted colonies. The probable consequence of this new war will be a mortal blow to that system of commercial monopoly which England for two centuries has so obstinately pursued, and which becomes weaker in proportion as it becomes more extended, because it is contrary to the natural rights of other nations." [1]

The United States navy at the beginning of the War of 1812 consisted of the following vessels: The 44-gun frigate *President*, the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, the 44-gun frigate *United States*, the 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake*, the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, the 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, the 28-gun corvette *Adams*, the 28-gun corvette *John Adams*, the 18-gun sloop of war *Hornet*, the 18-gun sloop of war *Wasp*, the 16-gun brig *Argus*, the 16-gun brig *Siren*, the 12-gun schooner *Enterprise*, the 12-gun schooner *Nautilus*, the 12-gun schooner *Vixen*, the 10-gun schooner *Viper*. This makes, in all, seventeen vessels of war, fifteen thousand three hundred tonnage, and four hundred and forty-two guns. The 36-gun frigate *New York* and the 28-gun corvette *Boston* were unseaworthy. The 16-gun brig *Oneida* was stationed on Lake Ontario. The officers and men numbered five thousand and twenty-five.

On the 25th of February, 1799, the rate of payment

[1] Journal de Paris, July 29, 1812.

in the navy was established as follows: Captain of a ship of thirty-two guns and upward, $100 a month and eight rations a day; captain of a ship of twenty guns and under thirty-two guns, $75 and six rations; master-commandant, $60 and five rations; lieutenant, $50 and four rations; any officer employed in the command of a squadron on separate service received double rations, and the commanding officer of the navy was entitled to sixteen rations a day. This schedule remained unchanged until April 18, 1814, when the President was authorized "to make an addition of twenty-five per cent to the pay of the officers, petty officers, midshipmen, seamen and marines engaged in any service, the hardships or disadvantages of which shall in his judgment render such an addition necessary." This law was repealed February 22, 1817. On the 3d of March, 1801, the price of a ration was fixed at twenty cents, and remained at that figure until January 1, 1814, when it was raised to twenty-five cents. In the British navy at this period an admiral of the fleet received $30 a day and was entitled to twelve servants, or $15,624 a year; an admiral received $25 a day and was entitled to ten servants, or $13,831 a year; a vice-admiral received $20 a day and seven servants, or $11,952 a year; a rear-admiral $15 a day and five servants, or $10,160 a year; every commander in chief received the further sum of $15 a day while his flag was flying within the limits of his station; a captain of the fleet received $15 a day and three servants, or $5,122. Each servant was calculated at $8 a month. Besides this, the British officer enjoyed many privileges and allowances not known in our navy. The pay of the surgeon after six years was $892; after ten years, $1,135; after twenty years, $1,460. The pay of physicians of less than three years' service was $1,703; of less than ten years' service, $2,555; and after ten years' service, $3,406. In the Dutch navy at this time the commander of 74-gun ships received $3,600 a year; commander

of a frigate, $3,200; commander of a sloop of war, $2,000.

In 1810 Great Britain had one thousand and forty-eight vessels of war, aggregating eight hundred and sixty thousand nine hundred and ninety tons, with twenty-seven thousand eight hundred guns.[1] Her number of commissioned officers and masters fit for duty at the beginning of the year 1812 was five thousand two hundred and sixty, while Parliament voted one hundred and forty-five thousand men, though one hundred and forty-six thousand three hundred and twelve were actually in service.

A comparison of the two navies.

	Ships.	Tons.	Guns.	Men.
United States:	17	15,300	442	5,025
Great Britain:	1,048	860,990	27,800	151,572

At the beginning of the War of 1812, says the London Times in its issue of December 28, 1812, the English "had, from Halifax to the West Indies, seven times the armament of the whole American navy," and this force was greatly increased as the war advanced. Besides this, Great Britain had naval ports at Halifax, Bermuda and in the West Indies, which were fitted with docks, arsenals, hospitals and all the appliances for waging active warfare. The Americans, on the other hand, owing to the mistaken policy of economists in Congress, were destitute of these facilities. They had no navy yard worthy of the name, the first one being established at Norfolk, Va., while their means for building, arming, equipping or refitting ships of war were inadequate for the needs of even their few cruisers.

In a letter to Mr. Cheves, dated December 3, 1811, Paul Hamilton, the Secretary of the Navy, said: "The United States does not own a dock. To repair our vessels we are compelled to heave them down—a process

[1] Chart of the British Navy. F. Perigal.

attended with great labor, considerable risk and loss of time; and upon a ship thus hove down the carpenters can not work without much inconvenience. Hence the Department is subjected to much expense, which might be avoided by the construction of one or more suitable docks." On March 3, 1813, a section was introduced in an Act for Increasing the Navy, appropriating one hundred thousand dollars for the establishment of a dock yard "in such a central and convenient place on the seaboard as the President of the United States shall designate," but this provision was not carried out. At that time the cost of building a dock in England was estimated at from one hundred thousand to five hundred thousand dollars, so that the appropriation of one hundred thousand dollars by Congress would not have provided a very efficient dock yard. On the 2d of May, 1815, the Commissioners of the Navy informed the Secretary of the Navy that "dry docks were absolutely necessary," and they recommended the construction of three sufficiently large to accommodate the largest class of ships.

Such being the vast superiority of the forces against which this "untried navy" had to contend, it is not surprising that the Government determined to keep its few cruisers in the harbors, to act merely on the defensive, fearing to risk them on the high seas. It is not strange that this "contemptible navy" became the butt of ridicule and of the "unmanly taunts" of English writers; and when Captain William Bainbridge and Captain Charles Stewart finally prevailed upon the Government to grant our officers at least a trial on the high seas, it is not strange that the Navy Department thought it necessary for them to sail in squadrons, lest by sailing separately they should fall an easy prey to the enemy. That subtile but powerful support called "public opinion," that popular backing which in all ages has infused a spirit of heroism into the breasts of the few so as to carry them over seemingly

insurmountable difficulties, was somewhat chilled, if not entirely lacking in the case of our seamen, when the public and even the Government distrusted their ability to cope with the redoubtable English frigate. It is hard to fight against confidence, and it is still harder to fight without confidence, so that between the contempt shown for them by the enemy and the want of confidence in their prowess on the part of their own countrymen, our officers found the real difficulties of the situation vastly increased.

CHAPTER II.

THE FIRST NAVAL EFFORTS OF 1812.

As soon as war was declared, a courier set out from Washington, and in three days arrived in New York. One hour after receiving the news, Captain John Rodgers in the 44-gun frigate *President*, with the 44-gun frigate *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur, the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, Captain John Smith, the 18-gun sloop *Hornet*, Master-Commandant James Lawrence, and the 18-gun brig *Argus*, Lieutenant Arthur Sinclair, got under way and stood down the Narrows. The 32-gun frigate *Essex*, Captain David Porter, was to sail with this squadron, but could not be prepared in time. The object of Captain Rodgers, besides that of a general cruise against the enemy, was to intercept a fleet of one hundred Jamaica merchant ships which was expected to pass near the coast of the United States about this time.

Taking a southerly course, the American squadron, at three o'clock on the morning of June 23d, spoke to an American vessel, and learned from her master that he had seen the Jamaica fleet steering eastward only two days before. Crowding all sail in that direction, the squadron, at six o'clock on the same morning, while thirty-five miles southwest of Nantucket Shoals, discovered a sail to the northeast. It was the British 36-gun frigate *Belvidera*, Captain Richard Byron, which was waiting to intercept the French privateer *Marengo*, hourly expected from New London. A few days previous Captain Byron had been informed by pilot boat from New York that war was likely to be declared at

any moment, and accordingly he was on the alert. Having sighted the stranger, the Americans abandoned their search for the merchantmen, and made all sail by the wind on the starboard tack to bring up with her. At 8.30 A. M. the stranger made private signals, but as they were not answered she stood away to the northeast with the squadron in pursuit. The wind was fresh from the north, and by 11 A. M. the *President* had forged ahead of her consorts and was slowly drawing up on the chase. Captain Rodgers now cleared for action and trained his bow guns on the enemy. About 11.30 A. M. the breeze moderated and shifted to the west, giving the *Belvidera* a slight advantage, which enabled her to keep her lead. This distance she maintained with little variation until 2 P. M., when the wind veered to the south, again giving the *President* the advantage in sailing. By this time the *Belvidera* was flying English colors. At 4.20 P. M. Captain Rodgers personally trained one of his bow chasers on the enemy and fired the first shot of the war; the second shot was fired from the first division below by Second-Lieutenant Gamble. Captain Rodgers then fired the third gun. One of these shot struck the *Belvidera's* rudder coat and went into the after gunroom; the other two passed into the upper or captain's cabin,[1] one of them striking the muzzle of the port chase gun, and the other, "breaking into several pieces, killed one man, mortally wounded another, severely wounded two, and slightly wounded Lieutenant William Henry Bruce and two men standing beside him in the act of pointing the gun."[2] At 4.25 P. M. the enemy opened from his stern chasers with considerable effect. The *President* then fired her fourth shot, but the gun burst, which, together with the explosion of the passing box from which the gun was served, killed or wounded sixteen

[1] Official report of Captain Byron.

[2] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. ii, p. 395.

men,[1] Captain Rodgers being among the latter. He was thrown into the air, and in falling fractured a leg. This disaster so shattered the main and forecastle decks as temporarily to disable the remaining bow chasers.

The broadside guns were then single-shotted, and yawing to port, the *President* delivered her starboard fire. This cut the *Belvidera's* "rigging and sails much, the long bolts, breeching hooks and breechings of the guns and carronades frequently breaking."[2] Resuming her course, the *President* again opened from her bow guns, and the enemy's fire also had become very accurate, almost every shot hulling or injuring the *President*. One shot, plunging on her deck, killed one midshipman and wounded several seamen. At 5 P. M. Captain Rodgers tacked and delivered another effective broadside. The *Belvidera* now had "several of her backstays, main shrouds and studding-sails halyards shot away, and her crossjack yard badly wounded."[3] Again following in the enemy's wake, Captain Rodgers still gained, in spite of the galling fire that the chase kept up on his rigging and spars. When the *President* came to the wind to deliver her last broadside Captain Byron noticed that her head sails lifted, and so concluded that she had in some degree lost the effect of her helm. He then quickly came to with the *Belvidera*, hoping to be able to rake the American before she could follow the manœuvre; but the *President* was too prompt, and after giving a yaw the *Belvidera* was brought back to her course. By 6.30 P. M. the *President* had still more reduced her distance from the enemy. Seeing that his situation was becoming desperate, Captain Byron began throwing overboard his spare anchors, barge, yawl and jolly boat, and pumped out fourteen tons of water.[4] This had the desired effect,

[1] Official report of Captain Rodgers.

[2] Official report of Captain Byron.

[3] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 359.

[4] Log of the *Belvidera*.

and from that time the *President*, being heavily laden for a long cruise, steadily lost ground. "Four of the *Belvidera's* boats were seen floating by the *President*, completely knocked to pieces, together with a great number of casks, spars etc."[1] By still further easing his ship Captain Byron was soon out of gunshot, and by 8 P. M. was two miles in advance of his pursuers. The chase was maintained in hope that some of the enemy's spars might give way, but at 11.30 P. M., seeing that it would be impossible to come up with him, Captain Rodgers gave the signal of recall.

In this chase the *President* lost three men killed and nineteen wounded, of whom sixteen were disabled by the bursting of the bow gun, Second-Lieutenant Gamble being among the wounded. She also suffered to some extent in her rigging, while her sails and spars were much damaged. The *Belvidera* lost two men killed and twenty-two wounded.[2] Among the latter was Captain Byron, who received a severe contusion on the left thigh. Besides the injuries already mentioned, the British frigate suffered extensively in her rigging, while her "main topmast was badly wounded."[3]

Having lost the *Belvidera*, the American cruisers resumed their search for the Jamaica ships, and on the 1st of July they fell in with "quantities of cocoanut shells and orange peels," which showed that they were in the wake of the fleet; but owing to dense fogs nothing was seen of the merchantmen, although they must have been within a few miles of the squadron. On the 9th of July the *Hornet* captured an English letter of marque. By the 13th the American cruisers had arrived "within eighteen or twenty hours' sail of the English channel,"[4] when they steered southward.

[1] Private account of one of the officers in the *President*.

[2] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 360.

[3] Log of the *Belvidera*.

[4] Journal of Captain Rodgers.

Passing the Madeiras, the Western Isles and the Grand Banks, Captain Rodgers arrived in Boston on the 29th of August, having been at sea sixty-nine days.

The meager results of this first essay of the navy on the high seas caused great disappointment throughout the country. The squadron had been fitted out with much care, was commanded by experienced officers and had the advantage of taking the enemy unawares, and it was confidently expected that a heavy blow would be struck at British commerce. It is not surprising, then, that the people, when the most formidable naval force which they could hope to get together during the war came back without having accomplished its purpose, were confirmed in their doubts as to the ability of their navy to meet the mistress of the seas.

The *Essex*, Captain David Porter, twelve days after the American cruisers left New York, got under way for a cruise to the south in search of the British 36-gun frigate *Thetis*, which contained a large amount of specie for South America. After taking a few prizes on this course, and failing to meet the *Thetis*, the *Essex* headed north, and on the night of July 10th she came across a fleet of merchantmen. As the moon was obscured by clouds, the approach of the *Essex* was not observed, and Captain Porter determined to avail himself of this circumstance to ascertain the force of the escort, and, if it did not prove too strong, to carry her by surprise. Every precaution was taken to deceive the strangers as to the *Essex*' character. Her guns were run in and the ports closed, the topgallant masts housed, sails were trimmed in a slovenly manner, the men were carefully concealed, save a few to work the ship, and every other effort was made to give her the appearance of a merchantman. Waiting until three o'clock in the morning, the *Essex* filled away and under easy canvas gradually drew among the strangers. The escort of the fleet was soon discovered some dis-

tance in advance, but she was not near enough for Captain Porter to make out her force. Edging alongside of the sternmost vessel, Captain Porter opened a conversation with her master, from which he gathered that the fleet was transporting about a thousand soldiers from Barbadoes to Quebec, and that the convoying vessel was the British 32-gun frigate *Minerva*, Captain Richard Hawkins; besides which there was a bomb ship and several heavily armed merchantmen.

As the people of the vessel thus spoken to did not seem to be suspicious of the *Essex*, Captain Porter drew still more into the fleet for the purpose of getting alongside of the *Minerva*. Drawing carefully ahead, he spoke to a second vessel, but the appearance of the *Essex* so alarmed the master of this ship that he was about to signal the escort that a stranger had joined the fleet, when the *Essex*' ports were thrown up and twenty black muzzles were thrust out. The Englishman was then commanded to maintain the strictest silence and to follow close in the frigate's wake, under penalty of being blown out of the water. So skillfully did Captain Porter manœuvre his ship and prize out of the fleet, that the other vessels did not manifest the first symptoms of alarm. Taking the vessel out a short distance, he found her to be a brig with one hundred and ninety-seven British soldiers aboard. Returning to the fleet, the *Essex* was about to renew her hazardous attack when the morning light discovered her to the enemy, and, seeing that further disguise was unnecessary, Captain Porter trimmed his ship in true man of war style, cleared for action and offered battle to the *Minerva*. But Captain Hawkins, although the *Essex* and her prize remained for some time on the outskirts of his convoy, deemed it his duty to abide by the remainder of his vessels, so, leaving the *Essex*, he continued his course for Quebec, while Captain Porter resumed his course to the south. His prize afterward was ransomed for fourteen thousand dollars.

From this time the *Essex* met nothing worthy of note until the 13th of August, when a sail was made out which proved to be a man of war. The men of the *Essex*, who had become skillful in the art of disguising their ship, gave the *Essex* the appearance of a merchantman endeavoring to escape. "We put our drags astern and led the enemy to believe we were desirous of making our escape by sending men aloft, shaking out the reefs, mastheading the yards, and making sail."[1] So well was the deception kept up that the stranger, dispensing with the usual manœuvres for ascertaining the speed and force of an antagonist, ran down on the weather quarter, gave three cheers and opened fire. The *Essex* responded with a broadside, which, followed up with a steady fire, reduced the enemy to a sinking condition in "eight minutes,"[2] when she surrendered. On sending Lieutenant Finch (afterward Captain Bolton) aboard the prize she was found to be the British 16-gun ship-sloop *Alert*, Captain Thomas Lamb Paulden Laugharne. The *Alert* carried two long 12-pounders and eighteen short 32-pounders, with eighty-six men. Only three of her men were wounded,[3] but her rigging and hull were badly injured, and seven feet of water was in the hold. The *Essex*, mounting forty 32-pounders and six long 12-pounders, did not "receive the slightest injury,"[4] all the shot from the *Alert* falling wide of the mark. When the seamen in the British ship had come fairly alongside of the *Essex* and had received her first broadside, they deserted their guns and "went aft to request their captain to strike the colors,"[5] and several of them, on being exchanged, were executed. The British official report of this action has not been published. The

[1] Farragut's Journal.
[2] Official report of Captain Porter.
[3] Washington Irving's Spanish Papers.
[4] Official report of Captain Porter.
[5] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 366.

flag of the *Alert* is preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

The *Essex* now had five hundred prisoners aboard, who outnumbered her crew two to one, and it was not long before a conspiracy was formed to capture the frigate and carry her into Halifax. But the plot was frustrated in a manner which again illustrates the superior discipline that was maintained in the United States navy. Mention has already been made of a habit Captain Porter had of sounding the alarm of fire at all hours of the night when the ship was at sea, and of still further testing the nerves of his crew by starting a fire in the hatches, so as thoroughly to accustom the men to the danger. The coxswain of the *Alert's* gig was the leader in the conspiracy to capture the ship, and on the night determined upon for the attempt he approached the hammock of Midshipman David Glasgow Farragut, famous in the Civil War, pistol in hand, to see if he were awake. Feigning to be asleep, young Farragut, as soon as the coxswain passed on, slipped out of his hammock unobserved, crept into the cabin and informed Captain Porter of what was going on. Captain Porter promptly rushed into the berth deck giving the alarm of "Fire!" The well-trained American crew promptly responded to the call and repaired to the main hatch, where they were armed and received their orders from Captain Porter. The prisoners became panic-stricken, and were secured before they recovered from their confusion.

Desiring to rid himself of his dangerous prisoners, but being unwilling to return immediately to port, Captain Porter, after having thrown all the *Alert's* guns overboard, employed her as a cartel, and sent the prisoners to Nova Scotia on parole under the command of Lieutenant James P. Wilmer. This arrangement, although agreed to by Captain Laugharne, was not in accordance with the rules of war, for the *Esser* was still several days from port and liable to lawful capture,

and her prisoners to recapture. By thus disposing of his prisoners on the open sea Captain Porter deprived British cruisers of this chance to recapture them, but Admiral Sir John T. Duckworth generously sustained the agreement made by his subordinate, saying, "I am willing to give proof at once of my respect for the liberality with which the captain of the *Essex* has acted in more than one instance toward British subjects who have fallen into his hands."

About midnight, August 30th, Captain Porter discovered a suspicious sail standing toward him, but the stranger, after making a private signal, consisting of two flashes and a blue light, and finding that it was not answered, put about and crowded all sail to escape, and by daybreak she was nowhere to be seen.

On the night of September 4th, while in latitude 39° 11′ North, longitude 70° 22′ West, the *Essex* was chased by the 38-gun frigate *Shannon*, Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke, and another ship. Believing that the two British ships had become separated in the night, Captain Porter determined under cover of the darkness to surprise the leading frigate (the *Shannon*, although Captain Porter was ignorant of her name) and to carry her by boarding—an attempt fully in keeping with the daring of the American commander and crew, as is shown in the *Essex*' subsequent career in the Pacific. All lights were extinguished, the stream anchor and cable were triced up to the main yard, ready to be dropped on the enemy's deck, and every preparation was made to board the English ship. The *Essex* was then put about and a sharp lookout was kept for the enemy. As the night wore on, however, no trace of the *Shannon* could be found, and at daybreak the ships were not in sight. Captain Porter then headed for the United States, and arrived in the Delaware on the 7th of September. During this cruise of sixty days the *Essex* made nine prizes, secured over five hundred pris-

oners and recaptured five American privateers and merchantmen.

In the latter part of the year 1811 the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, Captain Isaac Hull, was dispatched to Europe with specie for payment of interest due on the debt to Holland. From the Texel the *Constitution* proceeded to Portsmouth in order to communicate with the legation in London. Late one night, while she was in this port, a British officer came aboard with the information that an American deserter was in the British man-of-war *Havana*, and that he would be given up when desired. On the following morning a boat was sent for him, but the British commander said that it was necessary first to get an order from Admiral Sir Roger Curtis. In the absence of Captain Hull, First-Lieutenant Charles Morris, of the *Constitution*, waited on the admiral, but was informed that the deserter claimed to be a British subject and that he would not be given up. Additional sentries were now stationed in the *Constitution*, and on the following night the report of a musket shot startled the ship's company. Hastening to the deck, Lieutenant Morris found that a deserter from the *Havana* had come aboard, and on being asked his nationality he answered in an unmistakable brogue, "An American, sor." Lieutenant Morris sent word to the commander of the *Havana* that a British deserter was aboard the *Constitution*, and the next morning the American officer had the satisfaction of refusing to give up the man, and assigned the same reason as that given by Admiral Curtis when he refused to give up the deserter from the *Constitution*. This spirited refusal aroused much angry comment on the part of the British officers in the port, and threats of using force were freely expressed. Signals were now made from the British flagship, and soon afterward two frigates bore down on the *Constitution* and anchored so near that it was almost impossible for her to get under way without fouling them. With much skill Lieutenant

Morris got the American frigate under way and anchored a short distance from his objectionable neighbors; but he had scarcely done so when the two British ships also got under way and again anchored close beside him.

That evening Captain Hull came aboard, with several American gentlemen as passengers, and gave the order to put to sea. As the Americans anticipated trouble, the crew was sent to quarters, the battle lanterns were lighted, the decks cleared, and ammunition was piled near the guns in readiness for immediate action. The anchor was then weighed and the ship stood down the Roads, while the two British frigates also got under way and followed the American ship to sea. Captain Hull had no intention of being taken unprepared, like Captain James Barron in the *Chesapeake*, when that ship was attacked by the *Leopard*, in 1807, and he made every preparation for a desperate resistance. The swift-sailing *Constitution* led the Englishmen a long chase, and soon left one of their frigates far behind; but their second ship still maintained the pursuit. "If that fellow wants to fight," remarked Captain Hull to a lieutenant, "we won't disappoint him," and he gave the order to heave to, and allowed the Englishman to come up. Every one now believed that the *Chesapeake-Leopard* affair was to be repeated, and as the British frigate came within hail the eagerness of the entire ship's company for an action was at a high pitch. The men pulled the gun tackles as if they would jerk the bolts through the side of the ship, while the officers, passing through the different divisions to see that everything was in readiness for immediate action, gave words of encouragement to the crew. But the men needed no urging. "Let the quarter-deck look out for the colors, and we'll look after the guns," replied one brawny tar who had stripped to the waist, eager for the fray. Whether the too evident desire of the American frigate to engage rendered the

Englishman more cautious, or whether the chase was intended merely to bully the American commander into surrendering the deserter, is not known, but on coming within hail the Englishman exchanged a few commonplace hails and then stood about on a different course. When the drum beat the retreat and the boatswain piped the men down there was a sorely disappointed lot of men in the American frigate. They were disgusted at this tame ending of a valorous chase. The *Constitution* resumed her course for Cherbourg, and remaining at that port only long enough to refit, she stood over to America, and in due time arrived in the Chesapeake, where she was cleaned and coppered.

Captain Hull now learned of the beginning of hostilities, and shipping a new crew, many of whom had "never been on an armed vessel before,"[1] one hundred having joined the ship the night before she sailed, he put to sea on the 12th of July with instructions to join the squadron under the command of Captain Rodgers at New York. Although the crew of the *Constitution* was largely made up of inexperienced men, yet her officers were among the best in the service. They were: Charles Morris, first lieutenant; Alexander Scammel Wadsworth (an uncle of the poet Longfellow), second lieutenant; George Campbell Read, third lieutenant; Beekman Verplank Hoffman, fourth lieutenant; John Templer Shubrick, fifth lieutenant; Charles W. Morgan, a midshipman who was acting as sixth lieutenant; John C. Alwyn, sailing-master; William S. Brush and John Contee, lieutenants of marines; Amos E. Evans, surgeon; John D. Armstrong and Donaldson Yeates, surgeon's mates; Thomas J. Chew, purser; Henry Gilliam, Thomas Beatty, William D. Salter, Lewis German, William L. Gordon, Ambrose D. Field, Frederick Baury, Joseph Cross, J. Alexander Belcher, William Taylor, Alexander Eskridge, James W. De-

[1] Official report of Captain Hull.

lancy, James Greenlaw, Allen Griffin and John Taylor, midshipmen; Peter Adams, boatswain, and Robert Anderson, gunner. In keeping with the timorous policy of the Government, Captain Hull had been particularly instructed "not to voluntarily encounter a force superior to his own."

Till the 17th of July the *Constitution* had been progressing on an uneventful voyage, when at two o'clock in the afternoon four sails were made out directly ahead about twelve miles off Barnegat. At this moment the ship was under easy canvas, and the weather was clear, with a fresh breeze from the northeast. At three o'clock the lead showed eighteen and a half fathoms, and finding that he was getting too near the coast, Captain Hull went about on the opposite tack, steering due east. The vessels in sight were Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke's blockading squadron, which consisted of the following ships: The 38-gun frigate *Shannon*, Captain Broke; the 64-gun razee *Africa*, Captain John Bastard; the 36-gun frigate *Belvidera*, Captain Richard Byron; and the 32-gun frigate *Æolus*, Captain Lord James Townshend. On the same day this squadron had captured the United States 12-gun schooner *Nautilus*, Lieutenant William Montgomery Crane, but not without a hard chase of six hours, in which all her lee guns were thrown overboard. The *Nautilus* was added to the British service (her name being changed to *Emulous*, as the English had just lost a cruiser of that name), and Lieutenant Crane and his officers and men, one hundred and six in all, were taken aboard the *Africa*.

At 4 P. M. Captain Hull descried another sail to the north, which, being to windward, was in a position to close. This ship, which proved to be the 38-gun frigate *Guerrière*, Captain James Richard Dacres, did not seem desirous of coming down, and, on sighting the *Constitution*, kept her wind. The breeze continued light from the northeast until 6.30 P. M., when it

shifted around to the southeast, giving the Americans the weather gage. Availing himself of this, Captain Hull bore down on the *Guerrière*, keeping her just off his port bow, and at 7.30 P. M., being nearly within gunshot, he cleared for action and beat to quarters. For two hours longer the two frigates silently continued on converging courses, cautiously drawing nearer to each other. At 10.30 P. M. Captain Hull made the private night signals and kept them up forty-five minutes, without getting an answer; but he was unwilling to engage, as the strangers first discovered were still in his wake. At half past three in the morning, July 18th, the *Guerrière*, then only half a mile to leeward, fired two guns and a rocket, and immediately afterward made all sail before the wind, and when day broke she was fully two miles northward. In explanation of this sudden flight of the *Guerrière*, James says: "These two frigates continued to near each other, and at 3.30 A. M. on the 18th were only half a mile apart; when, observing on his lee beam two other frigates, the *Belvidera* and *Æolus*, and astern of them three more vessels, the *Shannon*, the *Africa* and a schooner [the *Nautilus*], none of whom answered or appeared to understand his signals, Captain Dacres concluded that they were the squadron of Captain Rodgers, and tacked."[1]

The same mistake seems to have been made by the other British commanders. Captain Byron reported: "I am much concerned that the blame should fall so heavily on Captain Dacres of the *Guerrière*. We were at quarters all night. The *Guerrière* and the American frigate were seen from us most of the night, and being near together, the impression on my mind was that they were both American frigates. We often saw lights on board both of them during the night, and I thought they were making signals to each other. I

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 370.

expected to be in action very early in the morning, and did not make signals, being apprehensive that they might induce the enemy to make sail from us. I really did not think, from the squadron's position in the evening, that the *Guerrière* would take the *Belvidera* and the *Æolus* to be American frigates. About seven bells in the middle watch, as it must have been (as the night signal appears to have been made by the *Guerrière* at 3.15 A. M.), it [the signal] was reported to me on the quarter-deck; but from the haziness of the morning I was not satisfactorily convinced that it was the real night signal. I rather thought it was the signal to distinguish British ships from the enemy when going into or in action, and I had mine hanging at the gaff, ready for showing, all night. The American came down within a mile of my bow and hauled close upon the starboard tack. My anxiety was not to frighten him away by signals. I am now sorry that I did not answer the *Guerrière's* signals, but as it was so near daylight a day signal might nearly be seen as well. I considered the rockets and guns of the *Guerrière* as announcing an enemy in view; but whether one or more ships, the daylight immediately coming on would inform us."

Daylight showed that the strangers were British ships, and Captain Hull immediately put about to the south to escape. At 5 A. M. the wind, which had been light, failed entirely. At that moment the *Belvidera* was about four miles off the *Constitution's* lee quarter, Captain Dacres, in the *Guerrière* (who by this time had discovered the strangers to be friends), was to leeward of the *Belvidera*, the *Shannon* was on the weather quarter of the *Guerrière*, and the other ships brought up the rear. At 5.15 A. M. Captain Hull hoisted out the first cutter and got his other boats to tow. In the meantime a 24-pounder was hoisted from the main deck to the quarter-deck, to be used as a stern chaser, and an 18-pounder from the forecastle

was brought aft, a portion of the taffrail being cut away to make room for it. Then two more guns were run out of the cabin ports, giving the *Constitution* in all four stern chasers.[1] The American frigate then set her topgallant studding sails and staysails.

At 5.45 A. M. Captain Byron, of the *Belvidera*, detecting the means by which the *Constitution* was slowly drawing away, sent his boats ahead to tow, and this expedient was then resorted to by nearly all the commanders. Every effort that ingenuity or experience could suggest was made to increase the *Constitution's* headway, and even the hammocks were removed from the nettings and the cloths rolled up to prevent their unfavorable action. "But in spite of all these exertions," wrote Lieutenant Morris, "our chance for escape was considered hopeless. For many months the *Constitution* had proved a very dull sailer, especially during the late cruise in Europe, and it was supposed that the first steady breeze would bring up such a force as would render resistance of no avail, and our situation seemed hopeless. At about eight o'clock one of the British frigates called all the boats of the squadron to her, and having arranged them for towing, furled all sail. This brought her toward us steadily and seemed to decide our fate. Fortunately for us, however, a slight breeze sent us forward a few hundred yards before the English frigate could set her sails to profit by it."[2] This light puff of air soon died away, and again the British frigate was slowly but surely drawing up to her prey. The enemy now opened fire, and some of his shot *passed over the Constitution!*

At this critical juncture, the lead showing twenty-six fathoms, First-Lieutenant Charles Morris suggested the feasibility of kedging. "With our minds excited to the utmost to devise means for escape, I happened

[1] Log of the *Constitution*.

[2] Autobiography of Commodore Morris.

to recollect that, when obliged by the timidity of my old commander, ——, to warp the *President* in and out of harbors where others depended on sails, our practice had enabled us to give her a speed of nearly three miles an hour."[1] As the situation of the frigate was growing desperate, Captain Hull resolved to attempt kedging, and accordingly the hawsers and rigging in the ship, from a five-inch rope upward, were spliced into a line nearly a mile long, one end of which was bent to a kedge or small anchor and carried ahead of the frigate in a boat to the full extent of the line and dropped into the water. The men then seized the inboard end, and, hauling slowly and carefully at first, until the ship was in motion, gradually increased the tension, and ran aft with it, thus warping the ship ahead. In the meantime another line and kedge were prepared, so that by the time the first kedge was tripped the second was ready to be hauled on. The *Constitution* now fired a gun and hoisted her colors by way of waving an adieu. It was some time before the puzzled Englishmen could understand how the American frigate, out of sight of land and in a calm, could thus glide from their grasp. But it was only for a short time that Captain Hull enjoyed the enemy's perplexity, for Captain Byron (who by this time undoubtedly was well versed in the arts of escape) discovered the secret, and promptly followed his example by "bending all his hawsers to one another and working two kedges at the same time."[2] It is difficult to determine to whom should be adjudged the praise: to the Yankee for his ingenuity in devising means of escape, or to the British tar for the readiness he displayed in imitation.

At 9.09 A. M. a light breeze sprang up from the south, and Captain Hull braced by the wind on the

[1] Autobiography of Commodore Morris.

[2] Marshall's History of the English Navy, vol. ii, p. 627.



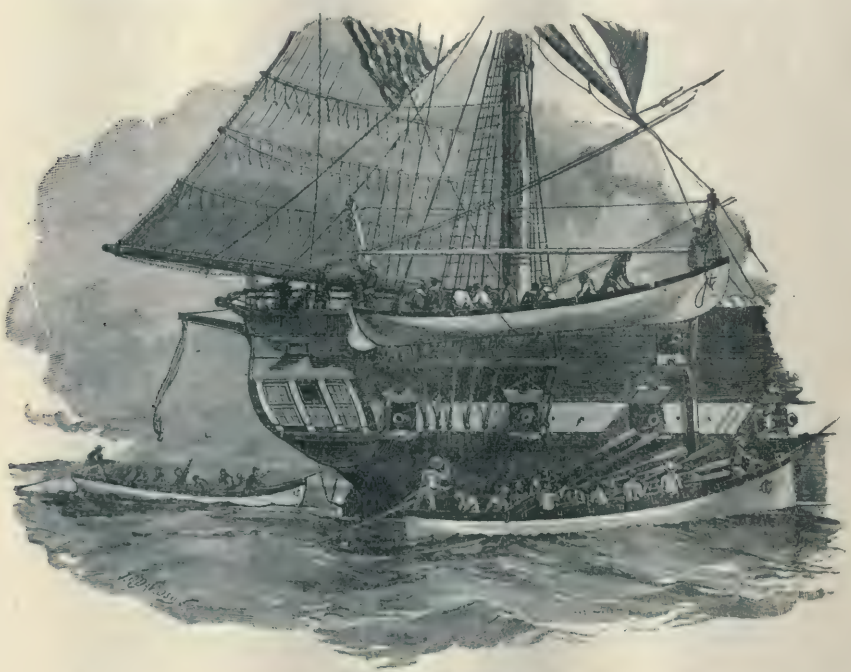
Chase of the Constitution.

In order to make the sails hold the wind better, streams of water were played on them, and buckets of water were dashed on the upper sails.

port tack, and, without losing an inch of headway, ran his boats up to their davits or suspended them from spars in the chains by temporary tackles with their crews still in them, ready to resume towing again at a moment's notice. The breeze came at a most opportune time, for the enemy, having put all his boats on the leading ship, was gradually bringing her into long range. Once there, she would soon have crippled the *Constitution's* spars and rigging, so that, when the wind did serve, the *Belvidera* and the *Guerrière* would have had no difficulty in closing. But, seeing the American frigate for the third time eluding their clutches, the *Guerrière* fired a harmless broadside. At 10 A. M. it again fell calm, when Captain Hull promptly sent his boats out to resume towing and kedging. The enemy then got all his boats on the *Belvidera's* tow line, which enabled her to gain so much that Captain Hull was compelled to lighten his ship by pumping out twenty-three hundred and thirty-five gallons of water.

The wind continued light and baffling throughout the morning and afternoon, and at 1.53 P. M. the *Belvidera* was nearly within range and opened fire, which the *Constitution* returned with her stern chasers, but as the shot fell short the frigates soon desisted. Thus with towing and kedging the afternoon of the 18th was passed. At 7 P. M. Captain Hull lowered his first cutter, the green cutter and gig, and sent them ahead to tow, but at 10.53 P. M. a fresh breeze sprang up from the south, and the boats were run up to their places, and the fore topmast staysail and main topgallant studding sail were set. This gave the exhausted crews much-needed rest. No one, however, thought of "turning in," but the men caught snatches of sleep whenever it was possible. The officers did not once leave the deck, and when relieved they threw themselves on the quarter-deck, sleeping on ropes, sails or any place where sleep was possible. All the men slept at quarters. At

midnight it again fell calm, but the commanders of all the ships allowed their men to rest until 2 A. M., July 19th, when towing and kedging were resumed and continued until daylight, at which time the *Belvidera*, having gained a position off the lee beam of the *Con-*



Hoisting the boats.

stitution, stood about to close. In order to avoid her Captain Hull tacked likewise, but in so doing he was compelled to pass within gunshot of the *Æolus* on the contrary tack. Much to the surprise of all, Captain Lord James Townshend, late of the *Halifax*, did not offer to exchange broadsides, and allowed the *Constitution* to pass unmolested. At 9 A. M. an American merchantman hove in sight, and in hopes of decoying her under her guns the *Belvidera* hoisted American colors. To counteract this, Captain Hull showed English flags, which induced the merchant ship to make

all sail before the wind, and as the British were too intent on capturing the *Constitution* to detach a frigate, she soon disappeared below the horizon.

By noon the wind had become light again, and it continued so throughout the afternoon. All this time the *Constitution* kept about four miles ahead of the enemy's leading ship, the *Belvidera*. The ships were now in latitude 38° 47′ North and longitude 73° 53′ West. At 6.30 P. M. a squall of wind and rain was seen approaching, and Captain Hull, still being to windward, determined on a stratagem by which he hoped to increase his lead. Everything was kept fast until just before the squall struck the ship, when, in an incredibly short time, all the light sails were furled, a double reef was put in the mizzen topsail, and every precaution taken to make snug for a heavy blow. Observing these extreme preparations, the English commanders supposed, as Captain Hull intended, that a squall of unusual violence was coming down, so, without waiting for it to reach them, they began shortening sail and clewing down, and bore up before the wind, which headed them in a direction opposite to that which the *Constitution* was taking. The squall, as Captain Hull could see, was light, and as soon as the rain shut in his frigate from the enemy's view he made sail and soon had his ship bowling along with a stiff breeze at eleven knots, instead of having her on her beam ends as his pursuers supposed. In forty-five minutes the squall had blown over, when the British squadron was seen so far to leeward as to relieve the Americans of immediate fear of capture, but the enemy with commendable tenacity persevered in the chase throughout the following night and until half past eight o'clock on the morning of the 20th, when they gave it up and stood about to the northeast.

This celebrated chase extended over three nights and two days—or sixty-six hours and thirty minutes—during which time Captain Hull displayed an indomi-

table perseverance and skillful seamanship, which have justly ranked him among the greatest of our naval commanders. Nor must the officers and men who so gallantly supported their leader during all these trying hours be forgotten. It will be remembered that when the *Constitution* sailed from the Chesapeake, five days before, her crew had assembled on her deck for the first time; many of them were then, for the first time, in a vessel of war, and had not as yet been thoroughly instructed in the duties or accustomed to the exacting discipline of a man-of-war. In spite of this, such coolness and order were maintained during the chase that not a single boat was abandoned. As each breeze struck the ship every boat was run up in perfect order, and the frigate continued her headway without checking her speed, the only losses being a few spars and the twenty-three hundred and thirty-five gallons of water. "The launch and first cutter, which we dared not lose, were hoisted on board at six o'clock, under the direction of Captain Hull, with so little loss of time or change of sails that our watching enemies could not conceive what disposition was made of them. This we afterward learned from Lieutenant Crane, who was a prisoner in their squadron."[1] Equal praise can not be awarded to the British commanders. Although they did not commit conspicuous errors, and persevered in the chase with praiseworthy persistency, yet, notwithstanding the fact that their vessels were manned by experienced crews (the crew of the *Shannon* having served together in the same ship and under the same commander upward of four years), they not only cut adrift many boats and spent much time in picking them up after the chase,[2] but they were completely outmanœuvred. So confident were they of taking the American frigate, that Captain Broke had selected a

[1] Autobiography of Commodore Morris.

[2] See the *Shannon's* log.

prize crew from "his Shannons" who were to have the honor of sailing the *Constitution* to Halifax. Captain Broke gives the following account of this chase in his journal: "July 18. At dawn, an American frigate within four miles of the squadron. Had a most fatiguing and anxious chase, both towing and kedging, etc., as opportunity offered. American frigate exchanged a few shot with *Belvidera*, carried near the enemy by a partial breeze. Cut our boats adrift, but all in vain; the *Constitution* sailed well and escaped." Captain Byron, of the *Belvidera*, wrote, "Nothing can exceed my mortification from the extraordinary escape of the American frigate." The Rev. Dr. Brighton, in his Memoirs of Sir Philip Broke, says: "The vexation of the whole British squadron may be inferred from Admiral King's account of the sharp recriminations among the sailors. The commanders of the little squadron exchanged their explanations in the *Shannon's* cabin."

After running the British squadron out of sight the *Constitution* headed northward, and on the following Sunday put into Boston for a fresh supply of water. The English frigates in the meantime separated, hoping that by thus spreading out their forces they would be able to capture the *Constitution* in single ship action. The *Shannon* and the *Guerrière*, falling in with the Jamaica fleet for which Captain Rodgers at that time was looking, escorted it over the Newfoundland Banks. The *Guerrière* then put into Halifax for repairs, while the *Shannon* returned to the coast of the United States.

CHAPTER III.

THE FIRST FRIGATE ACTION.

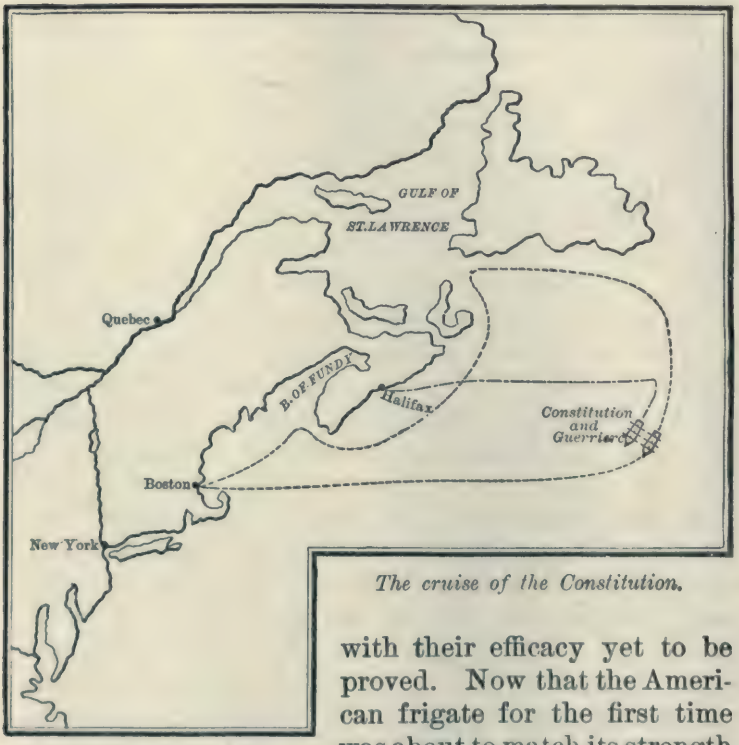
ANXIOUS to meet some of the famous British frigates whose commanders had indulged in contemptuous language about the "fir-built Yankee frigates flying a piece of striped bunting at their mast-heads," and fearing that the timid policy of the Navy Department might detain him in port, Captain Hull sailed from Boston on the 2d of August. A few days later instructions arrived in that city for him to "remain in port until further orders"; and "had the *Constitution* been captured on this cruise," remarked Rear-Admiral Bell, "Hull would have been hanged or shot for sailing without orders." Reaching the Bay of Fundy without taking a prize, Captain Hull made for the Gulf of St. Lawrence, hoping to fall in with the English 38-gun frigate *Spartan*, Captain Edward Pelham, or to intercept vessels bound for Quebec; but as he had little success here he stood out to sea. On the morning of the 15th five vessels were discovered. Setting all sail the *Constitution* was rapidly nearing them, when, after burning a brig, the strangers scattered. Selecting the largest vessel, Captain Hull soon overhauled her, and found that she was an English merchant ship in the hands of an American prize crew. It was fortunate, however, that the frigate hove in sight when she did, for the prize was about to fall into the hands of the British ships which were now crowding all sail to leeward. Before night closed in the *Constitution* made sail for another vessel, coming up with her after a sharp chase. She proved to be the American brig

Adeline, in the hands of a prize crew from the British sloop of war *Avenger*. By this time the two remaining ships had disappeared. Destroying one brig and ordering the other to Boston in charge of Midshipman Madison and five men, Captain Hull headed southward, intending to pass near Bermuda.

About half past nine o'clock on the night of August 18th, it being unusually dark, a strange vessel approached very close to the *Constitution* before it was discovered. Sail was promptly made, and after a hard chase of two hours the stranger was brought to. On sending a boat aboard it was found that she was the American privateer *Decatur*, with a crew of one hundred and eight men, and carrying fourteen guns, twelve of which had been thrown overboard in the chase, as the privateersman mistook the *Constitution* for a British cruiser. Learning from the commander of the *Decatur* that an English frigate had been seen the day before steering southward, Captain Hull changed his course to that direction in hopes of coming up with her. At one o'clock on the following afternoon, August 19th, latitude 41° 42′ North, longitude 55° 48′ West, a sail was discovered from the masthead, and after an hour's scrutiny through the glass she was made out to be a ship on the starboard tack, close hauled and under easy canvas. By 3.30 P. M. she was seen to be an English frigate, which, from her manœuvres, was apparently desirous of engaging, for as soon as she discovered the *Constitution* to be an American frigate she shortened her topsails, foresail, jib and spanker, and braced her main topsail to the mast, waiting for the American to come down. Observing this, Captain Hull, when the vessels were about three miles apart, sent down his royal yards, reefed his topsails and hauled up the courses. The ship was then cleared for action and the crew sent to quarters.

American frigates, with the exception of the *Constellation*, had not yet been opposed to those of rec-

ognized naval powers, while the many improvements which our officers had devised, the untiring discipline of their crews, and the drill of the men at the guns, with their many ingenious contrivances about the ship, were to a large extent innovations in naval warfare,



The cruise of the Constitution.

with their efficacy yet to be proved. Now that the American frigate for the first time was about to match its strength with the "Terror of the World," as Admiral Duncan called it, the American tar experienced the excitement which is attendant upon every hazardous undertaking, while the sense of self-distrust which great renown always instills in the breast of the inexperienced began to creep over him, causing him to wonder at his audacity in presuming to defy the vengeance of the redoubtable English frigate. But at the same time the memories of repeated insults to his flag,

and the brutal impressment of American seamen and the bloody lash, came to his mind with overwhelming force, arousing a thirst for revenge which predominated over every other emotion. A large proportion of the *Constitution's* crew carried the scars of British lashes on their backs, while nearly all of them had some score to settle with England's navy. A number of the American sailors were descendants of men who had suffered martyrdom in the British prison ships anchored at Wale Bogt in the War of the Revolution, and the thought of the brutal treatment which those patriots suffered did not lessen the desire of the hardy tars in the *Constitution* to meet the enemy. Captain Hull's father, Joseph Hull, died in the pest ship *Jersey* from the effects of the cruel treatment he received.

At ten minutes after four o'clock in the afternoon the English frigate hoisted four flags and fired a "few guns at the *Constitution*, more with a view to try the distance than for any effectual attack."[1] At 4.20 P. M. the ships exchanged broadsides,[2] but being at a great distance the shot fell short. For three quarters of an hour after this the English frigate continued wearing, so as to get a raking position, but finding that the Americans would not allow this, she laid her main topsail to the mast, afterward bearing up and running with the wind on the quarter under topsails and jib. Captain Hull, observing this indication that the enemy was willing to engage in a yardarm and yardarm fight, made sail to bring up with her, and at 5.20 P. M. he had his colors flying, a jack at each masthead and one at the mizzen peak. The antagonists now warily approached each other. "To avoid being raked," says James, "the English ship wore three or four times and continued discharging her alternate

[1] Brenton's History of the English Navy, vol. ii, p. 453.

[2] Official report of the English commander.

broadsides, with about as little effect, owing to her constant change of position and the necessary alteration in the level of her guns, as when her shot fell short." For the same reason the firing of the *Constitution* was ineffectual. James says the *Constitution*, "at about 5 h. 45 m. P. M., brought the English frigate to close action," which coincides with the statements given by Captain Hull in his official report. It is necessary to be thus minute in determining the time when this action began for reasons which will appear hereafter. It will be noticed that the English authority just quoted has said that the vessels came to "close action" about 5.45 P. M., and that the half hour immediately before that time was employed by the English frigate in "wearing three or four times," and that her fire during this wearing was "with about as little effect . . . as when her shot fell short." As the *Constitution* had to wear precisely when the enemy did, in order to avoid being raked, it is also true that her firing was with as little effect as "when her shot fell short." This, then, establishes the beginning of the action at "about 5 h. 45 m. P. M."

"As their manœuvres prolonged our separation, Captain Hull, at six o'clock, directed the ship to be

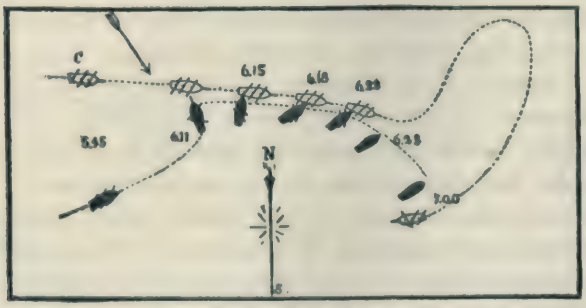


Diagram of the battle.

steered directly for the enemy, and the main topgallant sail to be set. The enemy now bore up gradually

to nearly the same course as ourselves before the wind, but with our greater quantity of canvas we speedily closed upon his port quarter and passed to his beam, at about two hundred yards' distance, gradually approaching still nearer."[1] Seeing that the ships were about to enter upon an action at close quarters, Captain Hull ordered the men to cease firing, so as to make every preparation to have their next broadside delivered with full effect. The guns were carefully reloaded with round shot and grape and deliberately trained upon the British ship. Having completed all these arrangements, the men stood silently beside their guns waiting for the order to fire. The frigates were now only a short distance apart, and the English officers could be distinctly seen through their ports searching the *Constitution* with glasses or moving about the ship encouraging their gun crews, while frequent cheers were wafted across the water to the ears of the Americans. The Englishmen maintained their fire with much earnestness, but as yet no order had come from the quarter-deck of the American frigate, and perfect quiet prevailed along her decks as the men stood by their guns, nearly all of them barefooted and many stripped to the waist, ever and anon casting inquiring glances at their officers. At this moment a shot struck the *Constitution's* bulwarks, and threw innumerable splinters over the first division of the gun deck, wounding several men. Observing the effect of this shot, the Englishmen gave three cheers; but still the American frigate remained silent. First-Lieutenant Morris now approached the quarter-deck, where Captain Hull was coolly pacing back and forth, and said: "The enemy has opened fire and killed two of our men. Shall we return it?" "Not yet, sir," was the response from the quarter-deck, and the men saw their mutilated shipmates hurried below to the surgeon's table, while they

[1] Autobiography of Commodore Morris.

stood silently at their guns in momentary expectation of meeting a similar fate. Nothing but the perfect discipline in the American frigate restrained the impatience of the gun crews and prevented them from returning the Englishman's cannonading. Three times Lieutenant Morris asked if he could open fire, and three times he was answered with a calm "Not yet, sir." But at last, having gained a position about forty yards off the enemy's port quarter, Captain Hull gave the order to fire as the guns bore. In an instant the frigate belched forth a storm of iron hail that carried death and destruction into the opposing ship. The effect of this carefully aimed broadside at short range was terrific. The splinters were seen to fly over the British frigate like a cloud, some of them reaching as high as the mizzen top, while the cheers of her men abruptly ceased, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded were heard. The Americans had struck their first earnest blow, and it was a staggering one. The Englishmen felt its full weight, and perhaps for the first time realized that this was no child's play.

So rapid and accurate were the American gunners, that at 6.10 P. M. the enemy's main yard was shot away in the slings, and his hull, rigging and sails were badly cut, while the *Constitution* had sustained no serious damage. At this moment a 24-pound shot passed through the Englishman's mizzenmast a few feet above the deck. The pressure of the sails brought it down with a crash, and falling over the quarter it dragged in the water, "knocking a large hole under her starboard counter."[1] The wreck acted on the ship like a rudder, bringing her up to the wind in spite of her helm, and the *Constitution* put her helm hard to port so as to rake, but the loss of braces, with the injuries to the spanker and mizzen topsails, prevented her from falling off as quickly as was desired. Nevertheless the

[1] The British commander at his court-martial.

Americans were able to get in two raking broadsides. At 6.15 P. M. the jib boom of the English frigate passed over the *Constitution's* quarter-deck, where Fifth-Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick was commanding the guns.

There was a lull in the uproar now as each ship's company paused to see whether the other would board. The British commander said: "It was my intention, after preventing the enemy from boarding to have boarded in return, and in consequence I ordered down the first lieutenant to the main deck to send up everybody from the guns, but finding the deck of the American frigate filled with men and every preparation to receive us, it would have been almost impossible for us to succeed."[1] When the crews rushed up on deck to board or repel boarders, they exposed themselves to the riflemen at short range, and the topmen in both ships soon renewed their sharp rattling fire with twofold energy. The frigates were now so close together that the enemy's cutwater chafed against the *Constitution's* side, and the white and gold figurehead of the English ship was within easy reach of the hand, while the bowsprit extended entirely across the quarter-deck, rising and falling with the motion of the waves over the heads of the Americans. As this spar afforded a convenient passage for boarding, it was feared that the English might make such an attempt, and Lieutenant Morris climbed up the taffrail to see if they were massing their forces. The British commander was discovered collecting his men on the forecastle, and he could be heard instructing his crew how to board. Lieutenant Morris reported this to Captain Hull, and the American seamen and marines, armed with cutlasses, boarding-pikes, pistols and muskets, were soon drawn up on the *Constitution's* quarter-deck, waiting for the first Englishman to show his head over the forecastle bulwarks.

[1] The British commander at his court-martial.

At this stage of the action both sides suffered a serious loss of officers. With a view of lashing the two ships together, Lieutenant Morris seized a rope dangling from the Englishman's bowsprit, and, climbing up, passed a few turns of the main brace around that spar, but at this moment a bullet from a sharpshooter in the enemy's tops passed through his body. He fell to the quarter-deck, badly stunned, but he regained consciousness in a few minutes and returned to his post. When it was seen that the vessels would foul, William S. Bush, the first lieutenant of the marines, and John C. Alwyn, master, ran to the taffrail with their men and stood in readiness to board the enemy. A ball from the Englishman's maintop wounded Mr. Alwyn in the shoulder, and when Mr. Bush had mounted the taffrail and was calling out, "Shall I board her?" a shot crashed through his skull, killing him instantly. Mr. Bush was the son of Captain John Bush, who served with distinction in the American Revolution, and he was also a nephew of Major Lewis Bush, who fell at the battle of Brandywine. Captain Hull at this moment stepped upon an arms chest to mount the taffrail and lead the boarders, but he was dragged back by a seaman, who begged that he would not get up on the taffrail unless he took off those "swabs," referring to his epaulets. So close together were the two ships at this moment, that an American sailor, having discharged his boarding pistol and missed his aim, threw the weapon itself and struck an English sailor on the chest. About this time the American flag at the main topgallant masthead was carried away, when a young sailor by the name of John Hogan ascended the rigging and lashed the colors to the mast, for which act he was pensioned. The British commander, while standing on the starboard forecastle hammocks, encouraging his men by his example, was shot in the back by one of the American sharpshooters, and had the ball passed half an inch more to the left the wound would have



The Guerrière in the trough of the sea.

proved fatal. Another ball struck the British master in the knee, and his mate, shortly afterward, was also wounded. There were seven marines in each of the *Constitution's* tops, six loading while the seventh, the best marksman, fired.

The rolling of the ships, however, prevented either party from boarding. In her present position the British ship could not bring a single broadside gun to bear, and, as she was exposed to a dreadful raking fire from the *Constitution*, she must soon have been destroyed. At this crisis the vessels fell apart, and the English ship, disengaging her bowsprit from the *Constitution's* rigging, paid off a little, and was enabled to bring her broadside into play. Some of the burning wads from her guns were blown into the *Constitution's* after cabin, and for a moment the ship was in danger of destruction by fire; but Fourth-Lieutenant Hoffman, who commanded in that division, succeeded in extinguishing the flames before serious damage was sustained. In dropping astern, at 6.22 P. M., the enemy's bowsprit, striking the taffrail of the *Constitution*, slackened the forestays of the English ship, and as the latter's fore shrouds on the port side had already been cut away, the foremast went by the starboard side, crossing the main stays. The sudden wrench thus given to the mainmast, already much weakened by the loss of shrouds and stays, carried it along with the foremast, and this enormous weight of masts, yards and rigging came down with a crash that for a moment drowned the roar of battle, leaving the enemy totally dismasted. She quickly fell into the trough of the sea, "a perfect wreck,"[1] and at each wave rolled the "main-deck guns in the water."[2]

Seeing that the enemy was incapable of making further resistance, Captain Hull, "about 6.23,"[3] prudently

[1] The English commander at his court-martial.

[2] Brenton's History of the English Navy, vol. ii. p. 51.

[3] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 379.

drew off to repair damages, for at any moment another British frigate or squadron might appear and make an easy capture of the *Constitution* while she was injured in her rigging. About seven o'clock she returned, and Third-Lieutenant George Campbell Read was sent aboard to take possession. At 8 P. M. he returned with Captain (afterward Rear-Admiral of the Red) James Richard Dacres of the 38-gun frigate *Guerrière*, one of the squadron that shortly before had chased the *Constitution*. This frigate, like several others of Captain Broke's squadron, had separated after the *Constitution's* extraordinary escape, in hopes of capturing her in single combat. Captain Dacres was a son of Lieutenant James Richard Dacres (afterward Vice-Admiral of the Red), who commanded the *Carleton*, one of the British vessels in the action with the American flotilla on Lake Champlain in 1776.

Some idea of the great humiliation which the British commander felt at being captured by the much-ridiculed American frigate will be gained from the conversation that took place when Lieutenant Read came alongside of the English frigate to receive her surrender. The American boat pulled under the *Guerrière's* quarter, and Captain Dacres, in response to the inquiry if he had struck, answered evasively, "I don't know that it would be prudent to continue the engagement any longer."

"Do I understand you to say that you have struck?" asked Lieutenant Read.

"Not precisely," returned Dacres, "but I don't know that it will be worth while to fight any longer."

"If you can not decide, I will return aboard my ship and we will resume the engagement," said the American officer.

To this Captain Dacres called out somewhat excitedly: "Why, I am pretty much *hors de combat* already. I have hardly men enough left to work a single gun, and my ship is in a sinking condition."

"I wish to know, sir," peremptorily demanded Lieutenant Read, "whether I am to consider you as a prisoner of war or an enemy. I have no time for further parley."

Captain Dacres replied with evident reluctance: "I believe now there is no alternative. If I could fight longer I—I—I—I—would with pleasure; but—but—I—must—surrender."

Captain Hull and Captain Dacres, like several of the American and British officers who met in battle in the course of this war, had frequently interchanged visits before hostilities were begun, and it seems that on one occasion Captain Dacres made a wager of a hat with Captain Hull on the outcome of a possible meeting between their respective frigates. When the commander of the *Guerrière* came up the side of the *Constitution* on a rope ladder to surrender his sword, Captain Hull assisted him, saying: "Dacres, give me your hand. I know you are hurt." When the English commander offered his sword, Captain Hull replied: "No, no, I will not take a sword from one who knows so well how to use it; but I'll trouble you for that hat." Learning of the great slaughter in the British ship, Captain Hull promptly sent his surgeon's mate aboard the prize to assist in tending the wounded. "I feel it my duty to state that the conduct of Captain Hull and his officers to our men has been that of a brave enemy, the greatest care being taken to prevent our men losing the smallest trifle, and the greatest attention being paid to the wounded."[1]

During the night boats were busy removing prisoners. At 2.20 A. M. a suspicious sail appeared off the port beam, steering south. The *Constitution* immediately cleared for action, and, owing to the precautions of her commander, was ready for another battle; but at three o'clock the stranger stood off and soon afterward disappeared. At daylight the officers in charge of the

[1] Official report of Captain Dacres.

Guerrière hailed to say that she had four feet of water in the hold, and that she was in momentary danger of sinking. All hands were then employed in transferring the remaining prisoners and wounded, and at 3.15 P. M., August 21st, the prize, being too shattered to be brought into port, was blown up.

We have already seen that American and English writers agree that this action began at "about 5 h. 45 m. P. M." Captain Hull says that at 5.55 P. M. he was within "half pistol shot" of the *Guerrière*.[1] There can be no doubt, then, that ten minutes before this, or at 5.45 P. M., the frigates were getting into effective range. The authorities on both sides nearly coincide also as to the time the action closed. James says the *Guerrière* became totally dismasted, or, to use the words of her commander, a "perfect wreck," at 6.23 P. M., while Captain Hull puts it at 6.25 P. M. Whether the *Guerrière* at 6.23 P. M. or 6.25 P. M. actually went through the formality of surrendering, is a point in dispute. By the account of an officer in the *Constitution*, the *Guerrière*, at 6.25 P. M., "fired a gun to leeward as a signal of submission."[2] On the other side it is affirmed that the *Constitution*, at "6.45 P. M., having rove new braces, wore round and took a position within pistol shot on her starboard quarter. It being utterly in vain to contend any longer, the *Guerrière* fired a lee gun and hauled down the Union jack from the stump of her mizzenmast."[3] It is immaterial when the *Guerrière* "fired a lee gun," "hauled down the Union jack from the stump of her mizzenmast," or went through any other form of surrendering. She was beaten at 6.25 P. M., as all accounts agree that from this time she made no further resistance. If at "6 h. 45 m. P. M.," when the English had been unmolested for twenty minutes, which they had improved by

[1] Official report of Captain Hull.

[2] Autobiography of Commodore Morris.

[3] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 379.

clearing the ship and making ready for further action —if after this preparation they found it "utterly in vain to contend any longer," what could they have done at 6.25 P. M., before they had cleared away the wreck that covered their guns? It is not improbable that some British seaman, seeing the *Constitution* out of gunshot engaged in making repairs, did, out of a spirit of bravado, tack an ensign on the stump of the mizzenmast, hoping that that harmless act might be construed as heroic, and that he could, in due time, claim a substantial recognition of it. But when the *Constitution* returned, all thought of fighting seems to have vanished, for not a gun or musket was fired, nor was resistance of any kind made after 6.25 P. M. This, then, establishes the duration of this battle, as being, on the best American and English authorities, from the time the firing became effective, 5.45 P. M., to the time the *Constitution* left the *Guerrière*, 6.25 P. M., at forty minutes.

The *Constitution* was twelve to fifteen feet longer than the *Guerrière*, and had a trifle more beam. The former carried thirty long 24 pounders, twenty-four short 32-pounders, and one long 18-pounder, making a total of fifty-five guns. Her crew numbered four hundred and sixty-eight all told. The *Guerrière* was captured from the French, off Färöe Islands, by the British frigate *Blanche*, Captain Lavie, on the 19th of July, 1806, and, says Captain Lavie, in his official report of her capture, "she was of the largest class of frigates, mounting fifty guns." At the time of her action with the *Constitution* she mounted, according to James' account, thirty-two long 18-pounders, sixteen short 32-pounders, and one short 18-pounder, in all forty-nine guns, while her crew was placed at two hundred and sixty-three, all told; although Hughes, in his History of England, places the *Guerrière's* crew at three hundred.[1] Deducting seven per cent for un-

[1] Vol. xiv, p. 18.

derweight in American shot, we find that the *Constitution* carried seven hundred pounds to the broadside, and adding eight per cent to the weight of the *Guerrière's* French shot we have a total of five hundred and ninety-seven English pounds to the broadside, or only one hundred and three pounds to a broadside less than the *Constitution.*

In this short action the *Constitution* lost her first-lieutenant of marines, William Sharp Bush, and six seamen killed; and her first lieutenant, Charles Morris, her sailing-master, four seamen and one marine were wounded.[1] The *Guerrière* lost her second lieutenant, Henry Ready, and fourteen seamen killed; and Captain Dacres, First-Lieutenant Bartholomew Kent, Robert Scott, the sailing-master, two master's mates, one midshipman and fifty-seven sailors were wounded, six of the wounded afterward dying.[2]

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Constitution:	55	700	468	7	7	14	Time
Guerrière:	49	597	263	15	63	78	40 m.

The attempt made by some English writers to show that the *Guerrière* was "an old, worn-out frigate," "looking like a second-hand jaunting-car, very fair without but most rickety and rotten within," is completely frustrated by Captain Dacres himself, who, according to the best of English authorities, expressed the following opinion of his ship a few months before she was captured by the *Constitution:* "Some time before this action [the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon*, June 1, 1813] the *Guerrière* was cruising in company with the *Shannon*, Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke, and the commanders and their friends, after dining together as usual, were pacing the *Shannon's* quarter-deck, when Captain Dacres drew attention to his ship,

[1] Official report of Captain Hull.
[2] Official report of Captain Dacres.

the *Guerrière*, which at that moment was just off their weather bow, bowling along in gallant style under easy canvas.

"'Well, commodore,' said Dacres, 'what do you think of the *Guerrière* now?'

"'H'm,' replied Broke, surveying her thoughtfully alow and aloft, 'I think she looks very handsome.'

"'Is that all?' asked Dacres. 'I say she looks beautiful; and more, she'd take an antagonist in half the time the *Shannon* could.'"[1] The *Shannon* was described by British writers at that time as "a very fine frigate of thirty-eight guns"; while a former messmate of Captain Broke, on hearing of his appointment to this frigate, wrote, "We hear your new ship is a very fine craft." On the 9th of October, 1812, before the question of the *Guerrière's* condition had been brought up, the St. Christopher's Gazette, of the West Indies, said that "the *Guerrière* is as fine a frigate as we can boast of."

The small superiority of the *Constitution* in weight of metal by no means accounts for the extraordinary difference in the amount of damage sustained by the two ships. The hull of the American frigate was scarcely touched, her injuries being confined chiefly to the rigging. All her braces, much of the standing rigging and a few spars were carried away. After applying stoppers and splicing her ropes, she was ready to engage another frigate eight hours after the action. The *Guerrière*, on the other hand, was utterly demolished in the incredibly short time of forty minutes. Captain Dacres says that "on the larboard [port] side about thirty shot had taken effect about five sheets of copper down [that is, below the water line], and she was so completely shattered that the enemy found it impossible to refit her sufficiently to attempt carrying her into port." In the forty minutes of this action

[1] Brighton's Memoirs of Sir Philip Broke, p. 139.

the *Constitution* expended twenty-three hundred and seventy-six pounds of powder and fired nine hundred and forty shot, or at the rate of twenty-three shot a minute. Of the number of shot fired five hundred and sixty were 24- and 32-pound round shot, while the rest were stands of 24- and 32-pound grape and canister.

While these exciting scenes were taking place at sea, American arms had suffered overwhelming disasters on land. General William Hull, an uncle of Captain Isaac Hull, had surrendered Detroit with the entire American force there, and all his stores and the vast territory of Michigan, without striking a blow in their defense. In remarkable contrast to the navy, the army had set out with every prospect of a brilliant campaign. By this ignominious surrender the British obtained a tract of territory which they hoped to extend to the mouth of the Mississippi, intending to cut the United States off from the West. General Hull was tried by court-martial under the charges of treason, cowardice and conduct unbecoming an officer, and being found guilty of the last two, he was sentenced to be shot; but, in consideration of his services during the Revolution, the President remitted the sentence. This disaster was soon followed by the surrender of Fort Dearborn (on the site of Chicago), and its garrison immediately afterward was massacred by the Indian allies of the British. News of defeat came in from all sides. British armies had crossed the frontier and were driving the discouraged Americans before them. The ears of our patriotic forefathers grew accustomed to reports of losses, while every courier that arrived was looked upon with foreboding as the bearer of more evil tidings.

And what was to be expected from the little navy when matching its puny strength against the victor of a hundred battles? Had not late experience taught Americans the folly of placing confidence in that feeble

branch of the service? Their best effort in this direction had failed of its object; the *Nautilus* was captured, and the *Constitution* had just escaped the clutches of Captain Broke's squadron by a miracle. The only relief to this dismal background was the solitary success of the frigate *Essex*, mounting forty-six guns, over the sloop *Alert*, carrying eighteen.

Such was the despondency that prevailed over the United States, when, on the 30th of August, the *Constitution*, gayly bedecked with flags, appeared off Boston Lighthouse, and, amid the booming of cannon, proudly passed up the harbor to tell the story of the first frigate action of the war. The joy that followed this first sunshine of victory after so many gloomy defeats was unbounded, and as the triumph came from a quarter where success was least expected, it raised the exultation of the people to a pitch which we, at this day and in our strength, can hardly understand. A banquet, over which John Adams presided, was given to Captain Hull and to the officers of the *Constitution* at Faneuil Hall. Congress voted fifty thousand dollars to the officers and seamen of the *Constitution*, a gold medal to Captain Hull, and one of silver to his officers. Lieutenant Charles Morris was the recipient of a handsome piece of plate; the citizens of Portland presented a sword to Lieutenant Alexander Scammel Wadsworth; while swords were also given to Midshipmen Charles Morgan and Taylor by the Legislature of Virginia. The colors of the *Guerrière* are preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

In his History of the English Navy [1] Captain Brenton says: "It is pleasing to add that, since Captain Dacres has been at Malta in command of the *Edinburgh*, he has had the satisfaction of meeting with and showing attention to Commodore Hull and his amiable consort, who visited that island very lately. Perhaps

[1] Vol. ii, p. 457.

there are few pleasures greater to a noble mind than meeting in peace those against whom we have honorably contended in war. Dacres always entertained a high respect and esteem for Hull." General James Grant Wilson, in a paper on the life of Captain Hull, gives the following: "Captain Hull asked Dacres if there was anything in particular in the *Guerrière* which he wished to preserve. On his expressing a desire to save a large Bible, the gift of his mother, Hull sent an officer for it. Many years later our hero met Dacres, then an admiral, and in command of a squadron anchored off Gibraltar. He expressed the greatest pleasure at meeting the commodore, and was constant in his courtesies and attentions. At a dinner given on board his flagship he showed Mrs. Hull the treasured Bible which her husband had saved. Dacres was deeply touched by Hull's humane and generous treatment of himself and his crew." While visiting Rome in 1837, Hull and Dacres were frequently seen walking arm in arm through the streets of the Eternal City. The former was short and stout, and the latter was unusually thin and tall.

The following song was written soon after Captain Hull's victory, and was popular many years afterward.

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE GUERRIÈRE.

AIR: *The Landlady of France.*

It ofttimes has been told that British seamen bold
Could flog the tars of France so neat and handy, Oh!
But they never met their match till the Yankees did them catch—
Oh, the Yankee boy for fighting is the dandy, Oh!

The *Guerrière*, a frigate bold, on the foaming ocean rolled,
Commanded by proud Dacres, all the grandee, Oh!
With as choice a British crew as a rammer ever drew—
They could flog the French, two to one, so handy, Oh!

When this frigate hove in view, says proud Dacres to his crew:
"Come, clear the ship for action and be handy, Oh!

To the weather gage, boys, get her!" and to make his men fight
better,
Gave them to drink gunpowder mixed with brandy, Oh!

Then Dacres loudly cries: "Make the Yankee ship your prize—
You can in thirty minutes, neat and handy, Oh!
Thirty-five's enough, I'm sure, and, if you'll do it in a score,
I'll treat you to a double share of brandy, Oh!"

The British shot flew hot, which the Yankees answered not
Till they got within the distance they call'd handy, Oh!
Then says Hull unto his crew: "Boys, let's see what we can do!—
If we take this boasting Briton we're the dandy, Oh!"

The first broadside we poured took her mainmast by the board,
Which made this lofty frigate look abandoned, Oh!
Then Dacres shook his head, and to his officers he said,
"Lord! I didn't think these Yankees were so handy, Oh!"

Then Dacres came aboard to deliver up his sword.
Loath was he to part with it, 'twas so handy, Oh!
"Oh, keep your sword," says Hull, "for it only makes you dull,
So cheer up—and let us have a little brandy, Oh!"

"Come, fill your glasses full, and we'll drink 'To Captain Hull!'
And so merrily we'll push about the brandy, Oh!"
John Bull may toast his fill! let the world say what it will,
But the Yankee boy for fighting is the dandy, Oh!

CHAPTER IV.

THE SECOND FRIGATE ACTION.

On the 29th of September, 1812, the British 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*, Captain John Surman Carden, sailed from Portsmouth, England, with orders to cruise off the coast of Portugal and Spain, and to keep a sharp lookout for French merchantmen and war ships. This ship was "one of the finest frigates in the British navy," [1] and at this time she was scarcely two years old and had just left the docks, where she had been thoroughly overhauled. From the time she was launched it had been the *Macedonian's* good fortune to be well officered and well manned. Her first commander, Lord William Fitzroy, a son of the Duke of Grafton, of the house of Marlborough, is reputed to have been one of the severest disciplinarians of his day. Whenever he appeared on his quarter-deck and began pacing the planks with a distinctively Fitzroy gait, a hush would spread over the entire ship's company; the officers withdrawing from the weather side and lowering their voices, while the seamen instinctively shrank from his gaze and went forward as far as possible. Lord Fitzroy may not have been a first-class sailor, but he was thoroughly conscious of his exalted rank, and was an enthusiastic disciplinarian. Bold indeed was the officer who had the temerity to address him as "captain," or to reply to his commands with a "Yes, sir," instead of "My lord" or "Yes, me lud."

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[1] James' Naval Occurrences, p. 125.

The *Macedonian* had not been many days out on her maiden cruise when an incident happened that will illustrate Captain Fitzroy's temperament. While she was at Lisbon, one of the sailors, named Bob Hammond, came aboard intoxicated, and on the next day he received four dozen lashes for the offense. As soon as the punishment had been inflicted, Bob applied himself lustily to the bottle, and before night he was again "gloriously drunk," and while in this condition he



Portsmouth.

suddenly conceived the idea of making a "sociable call" on the captain, just to show that he harbored no ill will for the flogging he had received. Marching up to the quarter-deck, he accosted his commander in the free-and-easy style with which one "good fellow" should address another, and said, "Hello, Billy, my boy, is that you?" Observing that he had made an impression, Bob followed up his advantage by saying, "You are young and foolish, my boy—just fit to launch. You are like a young lion, Billy, all your sorrows are to come." As soon as the noble lord could recover his voice he shrieked out, "Put that man in

irons!" And the next morning Bob received five dozen lashes.

In the eight months that Lord Fitzroy commanded the *Macedonian* he brought her crew to the highest point of efficiency, which was sustained long afterward. When he left her, the command devolved in rapid succession on Captain Carson, Captain Waldgrave and Captain Carden, all of whom ruled with an iron hand, and gave her the reputation of being the best-manned ship in the navy. The unusual efficiency of the *Macedonian's* crew was especially noticeable during her operations off Basque Roads in the summer of 1812. Captain George Richard Pechell, at that time serving as a junior lieutenant in her, records: "Scarcely was there a day in which the *Macedonian* for months was not engaged either with the batteries or stopping the convoys; and not an enemy's vessel in that roadstead even moved without the *Macedonian's* signal being made to advance—which alone gave repeated occasions for manœuvring and firing. The precision of the fire from the *Macedonian* was never more observable than on the evening of the 6th of August, 1812, when a French lugger was chased ashore under the batteries near L'Isle d'Aix."[1] David Hope, the first lieutenant of the *Macedonian*, said: "The cruise previous to our unfortunate capture we were under the command of Sir P. C. Durham. The men were not only well trained, but the greatest attention was paid to every department of gunnery."[2] The arrival of Captain Carden as commander of the *Macedonian* excited a transitory hope in the crew of less severity, as his grave and benign demeanor indicated a kindlier disposition. The men exhausted all their arts on him, and called him a "kind-hearted, fatherly old gentleman." But in vain, for he proved to be severer than any of his predecessors.

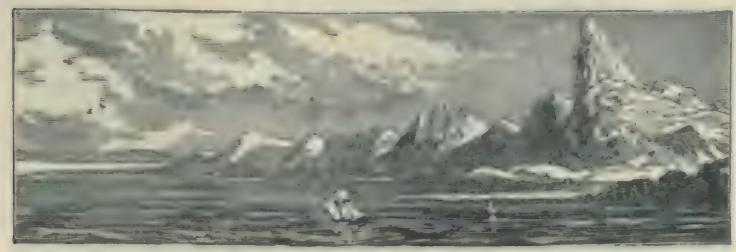
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[1] Letter from Captain Pechell to Captain Carden.

[2] Letter from Captain Hope to Captain Carden.

At the time Captain Carden sailed from England in the *Macedonian* news of the first action between American and English frigates had not arrived, although it was known that war had been declared. As the *Macedonian* was bound for the coast of Portugal and Spain, there was little anticipation of an encounter with an American frigate; but as there were a number of American seamen in her crew, the fact that war existed between the two countries was carefully kept from them. Rumors of the hostilities, however, were circulating among the men, and it was not long before the unusual precautions and sharp lookout kept by the officers, together with the knowledge that the relations between the United States and England had been more than usually strained in the last two years, made the men feel almost sure that the two nations were at war.

Arriving off the coast of Portugal, the *Macedonian* took a run down to Madeira, where eight hundred dollars' worth of wine was taken aboard and stowed away for the officers and their friends in England. While at this place Captain Carden was informed that the United States 32-gun frigate *Essex* had sailed, or was about to sail, from the Delaware, and it was expected that she would cruise in the vicinity of Madeira and the Canary Islands. Determined to teach the Americans that it was dangerous for them to sail too far



View in the Canary Islands.

from home, Captain Carden headed southward, and as he drew near the tropics he doubled his lookouts and

lay in wait for the little *Essex*. On the 24th of October the *Macedonian* began to enter the Sargasso Sea, the waters of which were turned to a yellowish tint by the immense quantities of seaweed brought into it by ocean currents. At dawn on the 25th of October the frigate was in latitude 29° North, longitude 29° 30′ West, only a few days' sail from the Canary Islands. It was a beautiful Sabbath morning. The sun, rising out of the semitropical sea, quickly dispelled the mists of early dawn and dried the moist sails and rigging of the frigate. The British seamen usually made a sort of holiday of this sacred day, and after they had donned their best rig and put their ship in order they went down to breakfast. Just as they were finishing the meal the man at the masthead shouted, "Sail ahoy!" Believing that it might be the *Essex*, Captain Carden rushed on deck, and exclaimed, "Masthead, there!"

"Sir?" was the reply.

"Where away is the sail?"

"To the northwest, sir."

"What does she look like?"

"A square-rigged vessel, sir."

After a few minutes' pause Captain Carden again called out, "Masthead, there!"

"Sir?"

"What does she look like?"

"A large ship, sir, standing toward us." The news quickly spread to all parts of the ship, and by this time nearly every man and boy was on deck eagerly straining his eyes to get the first glimpse of the stranger when her sails should appear above the horizon. Many of the men were murmuring their opinions to each other as to her probable character, while the Americans among the crew intimated that if she were an American they would surrender themselves to the captain as prisoners of war rather than fight against their flag. It was not long before the dreaded voice of Cap-

tain Carden was again heard, this time in more emphatic tones, "Keep silence, fore and aft!" and when all were quiet, for the third time he asked the man at the masthead, "What does she look like?"

"A large frigate bearing down upon us, sir," was the reply. Captain Carden then ascended the mizzen shrouds so as to get a better view of the approaching stranger. After several minutes of careful scrutiny through his spyglass he hastily descended to the quarter-deck, and with unwonted excitement in his voice gave the order to clear for action. In an instant the scene of tranquillity was changed into one of excitement and seeming confusion. The hoarse call of the boatswain's mates, "All hands clear ship for action —ahoy!" resounded through the frigate. The drum and fife beat to quarters, bulkheads were knocked away, the guns were released from their lashings and loaded; a woolen screen, drenched with water, having a hole cut in the center, was placed before the magazine entrance, where cartridges were passed; buckets of pistols were placed within easy reach, boarding pikes, cutlasses and battle axes were stacked around the masts, tubs of sand were placed at convenient intervals, so that the decks could readily be sanded where the blood was spilled on them, and ammunition was brought up and piled along the decks near the guns. Two marines and several seamen were placed in each of the tops to pick off the enemy with their muskets in case the ships should come to close quarters, and to facilitate the trimming of the upper sails if it should be necessary to put the ship through rapid manœuvres. Other sailors, called "trimmers," who were not connected with the gun crews, were stationed on the decks ready to trim the lower sails whenever the ship changed her position. All the guns of the *Macedonian* were furnished with first-rate locks, but as a further precaution the matches attached by lanyards were now lighted in case the locks should miss fire. With the exception

of the Americans and the band of eight musicians, all were in the best of spirits, and hurried to their quarters with an alacrity which showed that they were accustomed to victory. Only one man, James Holmes, the boatswain, was on the sick list, and at the cry of battle he arose from his cot and hurried to his post. The musicians asked to be excused from the impending conflict, and by virtue of their contract they were stowed away in the cable tier.

In an incredibly short time all the preparations for battle had been made, and the recent scene of confusion had been changed into one of quiet but eager expectancy. A lieutenant now passed along the batteries with the boatswain and securely locked the gratings over the hatchways, so that it would be impossible for any of the men to run below and secrete themselves in the hold. The main hatchway, leading to the cockpit, and that leading to the magazine, were necessarily left open, but a strong guard of marines was stationed at each opening, so that none but authorized persons could go below. A number of junior midshipmen were stationed at different points along the batteries, with orders, which were given in a loud voice so that all might hear, to "shoot down the first man who attempts to run from his quarters." Besides this, thirty marines with loaded muskets were drawn up in a line behind the gun crews, ready to shoot down any man who flinched from his quarters. The men were then instructed what they were to do in case it became necessary to board. When all these instructions had been given, Captain Carden himself passed along the gun deck urging the men to fight valiantly, and reminding them of Nelson's motto, "England expects every man to do his duty!" and then ran up the colors. The men responded with three cheers, and Captain Carden returned to his quarter-deck.

By this time the sail on the horizon had risen sufficiently to show that a frigate was rapidly drawing near

under a cloud of canvas. To avoid the possibility of a mistake, Captain Carden showed the private signal



Scene of the second frigate action.

of the day and his number, but after they had been kept up some time without a response he was satisfied that he had to deal with an enemy. The stranger now went through a number of rapid evolutions for the purpose of testing the *Macedonian's* speed, and if possible gaining the weather gage which the English ship held. The beautiful style in which the stranger was

put through these tactics aroused the admiration of the English. She tacked, luffed, took in sail or spread more canvas with marvelous rapidity, and seemed to answer to the slightest wish of her commander, like a thing of life. She was so near that the dashes of spray frequently drenching her forecastle and the foam rising under her bow, as she rushed swiftly through the water, could be seen sparkling and gleaming in the bright sunlight. With the aid of their glasses the British officers made out groups of men on her quarter-deck scanning them closely, while through her open ports they caught occasional glimpses of sailors moving about the decks and the gun crews standing quietly at their stations. The ominous absence of tompions in the long row of black muzzles that protruded from both sides of the frigate plainly indicated that the stranger was fully prepared for battle; while every now and then a shift in her sails revealed marines stationed in her tops armed with muskets, showing that they were not at all afraid of coming to close quarters. Having watched the manœuvres of the stranger some time, a veteran British seaman turned to his shipmate and muttered: "It's no fool of a seaman handling that ship. We've got hot work ahead of us."

As yet the stranger had given no indication of her nationality, and the British officers were still speculating on the chances that she was a French ship. Soon after, the *Macedonian* showed her colors, however, four little bundles, in the distance looking like mere specks, were noticed ascending the stranger's gaff and rigging. On reaching the mastheads they were secured, and remained there as if in no hurry to reveal themselves. But as the ships drew nearer, the bundles were suddenly loosed, and as the breeze caught them they fluttered out into the beautiful folds of the Stars and Stripes. At that time the American flag showed fifteen stars and fifteen stripes. The red, white and blue bunting, radiant in the brilliant sunlight, formed a

beautiful contrast to the snowy whiteness of the bellying sails and the cloudless sky. At the foremast a sturdy little American jack, with its white stars on a blue field, as if anxious to make the most of its short length, aimed its flight heavenward and fluttered several inches above the masthead itself. The American flags at the main and mizzen mastheads assumed their positions above the cloud of canvas with becoming grace, while "Old Glory" at the gaff majestically revealed its beautiful folds in quiet dignity. While this was taking place, the men of the *Macedonian* stood at their guns in motionless suspense; but when the nationality of the stranger was made known, several American seamen went aft, and through their spokesman, John Card (who was described by one of his shipmates as being "as brave a seaman as ever trod a plank"), frankly told Captain Carden their objections to fighting the American flag. The British commander savagely ordered them back to their quarters, threatening to shoot them if they again made the request. Half an hour later Jack Card was stretched out on the *Macedonian's* deck weltering in his blood, slain by a shot from his countrymen.

Finding that the *Macedonian* had the "superiority of sailing," the American commander prepared to engage with the disadvantage of a leeward position. A little after nine o'clock Captain Carden, more to test the distance than to do injury, ordered three guns to be fired from the port battery of the main deck. Three 18-pound shot promptly sped toward the American, and ricochetting along the rough water they sank before reaching the mark. Captain Carden then called out: "Cease firing! You are throwing away your shot!" An instant later he gave the command, "Prepare to wear ship and attack the enemy with your starboard guns!" The gun crews were shifted over to the opposite battery, while the marines changed their guard line to the port side. About 9.10 A. M. a long tongue

of flame leaped from the American port battery, followed by a column of white smoke, which rolled along the water a great distance, a ring of vapor floating off on the breeze. To the men on the *Macedonian's* main deck the report of this gun seemed to be from their own quarter-deck, but an instant later a peculiar noise, like the tearing of sails, was heard just over their heads. It was the wind of the American shot. This was followed by several more in rapid succession, which also whizzed unpleasantly close to the heads of the British gun crews; but as yet no damage had been done, and both ships ceased firing.

"About 9.20 A. M."[1] the firing opened again with great effect. The roaring of cannon could be heard from all parts of the *Macedonian*, and the ship trembled in every part like an affrighted animal, while the more distant but rapid booming from the American frigate proclaimed that the battle had opened in earnest. In a few seconds the sound of shot crashing through the side of the ship could be heard. The first one that struck the *Macedonian* came through the starboard bulwark and killed the sergeant of marines,[2] and soon afterward her gaff halyards were carried away. Scarcely had this happened when the men on the quarter-deck were startled by a sharp crack over their heads. Looking upward, they saw the mizzen topmast swaying back and forth, and an instant later with a terrific crash it fell with its enormous weight of sails, yards and rigging into the maintop. There it lay in a horizontal line suspended between the mizzen and main tops, threatening to fall at any moment and crush the men working the guns below. But the gunners had no time to consider this danger, for their officers were behind them, and with drawn swords were constantly urging them to renewed energy. As they

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 395.

[2] Statement of Captain Carden.

warmed up to the fight many of the men pulled off their jackets, others their jackets and waistcoats, and finally many had nothing on them but trousers with a

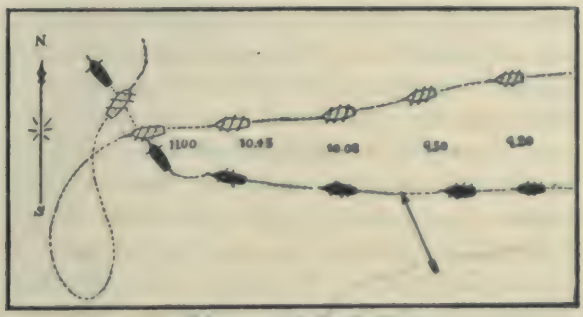


Diagram of the battle.

handkerchief tied around their waists, one of the seamen named Jack Sadler being especially conspicuous for the energy with which he fought. Many of the men and boys seemed to be entirely unconscious of danger. A powder boy named Cooper, who was stationed at a gun some distance from the magazine, so that he had to pass nearly the whole length of the batteries at each trip, would receive a cartridge from the woolen screen before the magazine, and, covering it with his jacket to guard against sparks, would return to his gun on a full run, jumping over men writhing in their death agonies, and skipping over pools of blood as merrily as if engaged in a steeple chase. Lieutenant John Bulford occasionally cheered him with a "Well done, my boy! You are worth your weight in gold."

Ten minutes after the battle had opened, the scene in the *Macedonian* was indescribably confused and horrible. "It was like some awfully tremendous thunderstorm whose deafening roar is attended by incessant streaks of lightning, carrying death in every flash and strewing the ground with victims of its wrath; only in our case the scene was rendered more horrible than that by the presence of torrents of blood

which dyed our decks."[1] While one of the men stationed at the fifth gun on the main deck was stooping to lift a shot, blood suddenly spurted from his arm, although nothing was seen to strike him. The third lieutenant quickly tied a handkerchief around the shattered limb and sent the groaning wretch below to the cockpit. In order to keep the decks clear the injured were hurried below as fast as possible, while those who were killed outright, or were so mutilated as to be beyond hope of recovery, were thrown overboard without ceremony. The slaughter among the boys of the *Macedonian* was one of the most painful incidents of the battle. The lads supplying the sixth and seventh guns on the main deck were disabled early in the action, one of them having his leg taken off by a cannon shot, while the other was struck in the ankle by a grapeshot. A stout Yorkshire man lifted the latter in his arms and carried him to the cockpit, where the foot was amputated. A Portuguese boy who was supplying the quarter-deck guns had nearly all the flesh on his face burned off by an accidental explosion of the cartridge he was carrying, and as the agonized youth lifted both hands, as if imploring relief, a cannon shot cut him in two. Another Portuguese boy serving the quarter-deck guns was also killed.

While this carnage and destruction were taking place in the *Macedonian*, Captain Carden and his aids, who were directing the battle from the quarter-deck, could not discover anything in the appearance of the American frigate to indicate that she was suffering in a corresponding degree. In the early part of the action, it is true, a shot carried away her mizzen topgallant mast, but aside from this her spars seemed to be intact. Her firing had been wonderfully accurate, and was so rapid that "in a few minutes she was enveloped in a dense volume of smoke, which from the

[1] Account of an eyewitness.

Macedonian's quarter-deck appeared like a huge cloud rolling along the water, illuminated by lurid flashes of lightning and emitting a continuous roar of thunder." But the unceasing storm of round shot, grape and canister, and the occasional glimpses of the Stars and Stripes floating above the clouds of smoke, forcibly dispelled the illusion, and showed the Englishmen that they were dealing with an enemy who knew how to strike, and who struck hard.

At 9.50 A. M., or thirty minutes after the battle opened, the American commander found such volumes of dense smoke collected around his ship that it was impossible to fire with accuracy. Giving the order to cease firing, he took a position a little forward of the *Macedonian's* beam and renewed the battle. The fire from the American frigate at close quarters was terrific. Her cannon were handled with such rapidity that there seemed to be one continuous flash from her broadside, and several times Captain Carden and his officers believed her to be on fire,[1] and they spread the report along the British batteries so as to encourage the exhausted gun crews, who responded with cheers. It was in reference to this incident that the following verses appeared in a periodical soon after the war:

"They thought they saw our ship in flame,
Which made them all huzza, sir;
But when the second broadside came
It made them hold their jaw, sir."

The diagonal fire from the American frigate soon cut away the chocks of the guns, dismounted every carronade on the starboard side of the quarter-deck and forecastle, and cut down officers and men in great numbers. By 10.45 A. M. the carnage in the *Macedonian* was fearful. The cries of the wounded and dying came from all parts of the ship. One man,

[1] Mackenzie's Life of Stephen Decatur.

named Aldrich, had his hand taken off by a shot, and almost at the same instant another shot tore open his bowels in a horrible manner. Two or three of his shipmates caught him as he fell and threw him overboard while he was yet alive. A quartermaster's mate named Thomas James Nankivee, who was exceedingly popular with the men, was struck near the heart by a grape or canister shot, and exclaiming, "Oh, my God!" he was carried below and shortly afterward died. The tyrannical first lieutenant, David Hope, was wounded on the head by a grummet which had been torn from a hammock clew by a shot and was hurled against him. He went below, and after his wound had been dressed he returned to the deck shouting at the top of his voice, "Keep on fighting!" There was not a seaman in the ship who would not have rejoiced had Hope shared the fate of Nankivee. One heavy shot shattered the muzzle of the fifth gun on the main deck and scattered the fragments around, injuring several men. When the ship rolled, the remainder of the gun struck a beam of the upper deck and became jammed in that position. A 24-pound shot also passed through the flannel screen of the magazine, just over the opening through which the ammunition was passed. James Holmes, the boatswain, who had left his cot in the sick bay at the call to quarters, was in the act of fastening a stopper on a backstay which had been carried away, when a cannon ball struck him on the head, killing him instantly; and another man, attempting to complete the unfinished task, was also struck down. Shortly afterward the schoolmaster, Dennis Colwell, was mortally wounded. While stepping from the cabin door the steward was struck by a heavy shot and instantly killed. Even the goat kept by the officers for her milk did not escape the dreadful storm of iron, for her hind legs were shot off, and she was thrown overboard.

But above the din of battle and the groans of the wounded rose the frequent cheers and shouts of the

men who yet remained unhurt. Samuel Leech, who was in the *Macedonian* during this battle, said: "Our men kept cheering with all their might. I cheered with them, though I confess I scarcely knew what for. Certainly there was nothing very inspiriting in the aspect of things. Grapeshot and canister were pouring through our portholes like leaden hail; the large shot came against the ship's side, shaking her to the very keel, and passing through her timbers and scattering terrific splinters, which did more appalling work than the shot itself. A constant stream of wounded men were being hurried to the cockpit from all quarters of the ship. My feelings were pretty much as I suppose every one else felt at such a time. That men are without thought when they stand among the dying and dead is too absurd an idea to be entertained. We all appeared cheerful, but I know that many a serious thought ran through my mind. Still, what could we do but keep up a semblance at least of animation? To run from our quarters would have been certain death from the hands of our own officers; to give way to gloom or show fear would do no good, and might brand us with the name of cowards and insure certain defeat. Our only true philosophy, therefore, was to make the best of our situation by fighting bravely and cheerfully. I thought a good deal, however, of the other world; every groan, every falling man, told me that the next instant I might be before my Judge. A fellow named John, who for some petty offense had been put on board as a punishment, was carried past me wounded. I distinctly heard the large drops of blood fall—pat—pat—pat—on the deck. His wound was mortal."

And still the American frigate kept up her merciless cannonading. As the breeze occasionally made a rent in the smoke, her officers could be seen walking around her quarter-deck, calmly directing the work of destruction, while her gun crews were visible through the open

ports deliberately loading and aiming their pieces. At 10.45 A. M. a shot carried away the stump of the *Macedonian's* mizzenmast, and the men on it at the time were lost. Availing himself of the superior sailing of the *Macedonian* and the advantage which the weather gage gave him, Captain Carden at first kept at long range, being under the impression that he was attacking the *Essex*, which, as he well knew, was armed almost entirely with short guns; and he believed that he was holding himself at a great advantage by attacking her at long range, where her short guns could not reach him. But it was not long before he was convinced of the mistake, and he determined to bring his antagonist to close quarters so as to decide his shattered fortunes by boarding. With this in view he ordered his helm aport and gave the order for boarders to be called. "Every man was on deck, several who had lost an arm responded, and the universal cheer was, 'Let us conquer or die!'"[1] But, unfortunately for Captain Carden's intentions, a shot at this moment carried away the fore brace, and the yard swinging around threw the ship into the wind and exposed her to a raking fire. The American quickly availed himself of this advantage and poured in a terrific storm of round shot, grape and canister.

After a few minutes of this exposure the *Macedonian* was reduced to a wreck. Her decks were strewed with the dead and dying; men were frequently coming up the main hatchway bearing limbs that had just been detached from some suffering wretches, which were to be cast overboard, for there was not sufficient room to allow the accumulation of these severed members. As the cockpit long before had been crowded to overflowing, the surgeon removed his instruments into the steerage. All these rooms were filled with injured men, some groaning, others cursing, a few praying,

[1] Account of First-Lieutenant David Hope of the *Macedonian*.



The United States taking the Macedonian.

while those that arrived last were begging most piteously to have their wounds dressed next. The long table of the wardroom, around which the officers had sat at many a jolly mess, was covered with mangled bodies which the surgeon and his mate, smeared from head to foot with blood, and looking more like butchers than physicians, were cutting and sawing, for there was no time for anæsthetics or refined surgery. A Swede, named Logholm, was brought down toward the close of the action with a serious wound just above the kneecap. Without ceremony he was thrown on the bloody table, and was firmly held by several men while the surgeon, in spite of the agonizing cries and the fearful struggles of the man, cut the leg off above the knee. The carpenter, Reed, had his leg taken off in the same manner, while some of the men were so dreadfully mangled with splinters that the surgeon pronounced their cases hopeless, and as an act of mercy they were taken on deck and thrown into the sea, where their groans, prayers or imprecations were quickly hushed by the surging waters. As most of the wounded were lying helplessly on the lower decks, cots were got out as fast as possible for their accommodation. One seaman, named Wells, after having had his arm amputated, cheerfully said: "Well, doctor, I have lost my arm in the service of my country, but I don't mind it. It's the fortune of war." His companions, after the battle was over, gave him some rum to drink, inflammation set in, and he soon died. Another poor fellow who had been lying helplessly on the deck a long time with a broken thigh bone, waiting for his turn at the surgeon's table, begged one of the ship's boys for a cup of water. His request was complied with, and, with a look of unutterable gratitude, he drank—and died.

By eleven o'clock the *Macedonian* was totally disabled. Her mizzenmast had been shot away close to the deck and had fallen with the mizzen topmast over

her starboard quarter, so that the guns in that part of the ship could not be fired without setting the wreck in a flame. Her fore and main topmasts had been shot away at the caps, the main yard was gone in the slings, the lower masts were cut and shattered, rigging of every description had been destroyed, only a portion of the foresail was left to the yard, all but two of the forecastle and quarter-deck guns were disabled, while two guns of the main battery were knocked to pieces. Over one hundred cannon shot had penetrated her hull, many of them between wind and water, all of her boats except the jolly boat towing astern had been smashed into splinters, and owing to her dismasted condition she rolled her main-deck guns under water. About eleven o'clock the deafening roar of cannon from the American frigate and the incessant rattling of iron missiles against the side of the *Macedonian* suddenly ceased. An oppressive silence followed, broken only by the stifled groans of the wounded below and the creaking of the hulk as she rolled on her beam ends at each wave. Not understanding this unexpected cessation of the battle, the English officers hastened to discover the cause of it, and as soon as the smoke had cleared away sufficiently they beheld the American frigate standing away from them. Hoping she was fleeing because another frigate was appearing on the scene of action, or for some cause unknown to them, the surviving Englishmen gave three cheers. But in the course of three quarters of an hour this transitory hope vanished, for the American, after hauling out of gunshot, hove to, spliced her rigging, bent a few new sails, and having repaired her other inconsiderable injuries, with the exception of the mizzen topgallant mast, again with guns reloaded bore down on the helpless *Macedonian*.

Captain Carden now assembled his surviving officers on the deck in a council of war. Lieutenant David Hope advised that the colors should not be struck and

that it would be better for them to sink alongside. His advice was not followed, and it was soon decided to surrender. About noon, just as the American frigate, under easy canvas, with colors flying, came under the *Macedonian's* stern, ready to repeat her dreaded broadsides, a sailor named Watson hauled down the English colors. The American promptly lay to, lowered one of her boats, and sent a party of seamen and marines under the command of a lieutenant to take possession. The little boat was tossed about by the heavy sea like a cockleshell, and coming under the *Macedonian's* lee the lieutenant clambered up the side and announced himself to Captain Carden as Lieutenant John B. Nicholson, of the American 44-gun frigate *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur. The *United States* had sailed from Boston on the 8th of October in company with the 44-gun frigate *President*, Captain John Rodgers; the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, Captain John Smith; and the 16-gun brig *Argus*, Master-Commandant Arthur Sinclair. On the fourth day out the *President*, with the *Congress*, separated from the *United States* and the *Argus*, and after cruising for a few day together the *United States* and the *Argus* also took separate courses, the latter making for the coast of Brazil, while the former stood over for Africa, and on the 25th of October fell in with the *Macedonian*.

The American boarders were shocked at the awful carnage and destruction that met their gaze in the *Macedonian*. The officers and seamen of the two frigates were well acquainted with each other, having exchanged visits when the *United States* and the *Macedonian* were lying in Norfolk some months before war had been declared, and they were not a little surprised when they discovered whom they had been fighting. Going to the wardroom, Lieutenant Nicholson found the surgeon still attending the wounded, and familiarly greeted him with: "How do you do, doc-

tor?" Looking up with a surprised glance at the sound of the well-known voice, the surgeon shook his head sadly and replied: "I have enough to do. You fellows have made wretched work with us." With difficulty the Americans made their way through the steerage, which was filled with mangled bodies, and as the deck was slippery with blood the heavy rolling of the ship made their progress extremely hazardous. They met a boy who was crying as if his heart would break because his master, James Holmes, the boatswain, whose head had been shattered by a cannon ball, was dead. The lad felt that he had lost his only friend. Many of the Englishmen were running around the ship looking up their messmates and ascertaining who had escaped. Many affecting scenes took place at these meetings. Some had heard that a messmate was dead, and great joy was expressed when they found him alive. On the day after the battle, a boy passing along the berth deck found a hammock strung up with some one apparently sleeping in it. Attempting to rouse the man, it was found that he was dead; evidently he had been wounded and had crawled into his hammock. In the confusion he had escaped notice and had bled to death.

The surviving English officers and a number of the men were quickly transferred to the *United States*, but those who were left in the wreck, being relieved of the restraint of their officers, broke into the spirit room and became intoxicated and riotous. Many of the wounded were persuaded to drink, and aggravated their wounds by doing so. Their boisterous songs and derisive laughter mingling with the piteous cries of the wounded were heard far into the night, but amid it all the faithful surgeon patiently continued at his revolting task in the steerage, nor did he find time to rest until day broke. When Captain Decatur came aboard he found "fragments of the dead scattered in every direction, the decks slippery with blood, one continuous agonizing yell of the unhappy wounded. A

scene so horrible of my fellow-creatures, I assure you, deprived me very much of the pleasure of victory."[1]

The personality of the American and English commanders was sufficiently remarkable to merit a moment's notice. They were men of no ordinary fame, both having risen to distinction from the lowest ranks. Captain Decatur was in his thirty-fourth year, Captain Carden in his forty-second. As was the case with Captains Hull and Dacres, their fathers had been engaged in the war of the American Revolution. Captain Stephen Decatur, Sr., commanded the privateers *Royal Louis* and the *Fair American*, and Major Carden, the father of Captain Carden, died from wounds received in the same war while serving in the British army in America. Captain Decatur began his naval career in the French War, entering the United States cruiser *Delaware* as a midshipman, April 30, 1798, the ship at that time being commanded by his father. Young Decatur also assisted in getting out the keel pieces of the frigate *United States*, in which he achieved his brilliant victory. His career in the Mediterranean, and his extraordinary exploit in destroying the 36-gun frigate *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli, have already been narrated.

Captain Carden began his career in the navy with the disadvantage of royal displeasure. In his father's absence in America young Carden was appointed by Queen Charlotte a page to the King, and also an ensign in Major Carden's regiment, although the lad was less than eight years old. As Mrs. Carden, who was in Ireland, refused to take charge of one of the royal progeny as a nurse until she received permission to do so from her husband, young Carden's name was stricken from the list of pages and the roll of his regiment, which put an end to his prospects of advancement either at court or in the army. At the age

[1] Captain Decatur in a letter to Mrs. Decatur.

of sixteen he entered the navy as the captain's servant in the 74-gun ship of the line *Edgar*, Captain Charles Thompson. · In 1789, while in the ship *Perseverance*, he cruised in the East Indies, and in 1790 was made a midshipman. During Lord Howe's memorable engagement, June 1, 1794, young Carden was conspicuous for his bravery, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant. He served with credit in the 74-gun ship *Marlborough*, the 98-gun ship *Formidable*, the 98-gun ship *Barfleur* and the 100-gun ship *Queen Charlotte*. As first lieutenant in the 46-gun frigate *Fisgard* he again displayed conspicuous gallantry during the action with *l'Immortalité*, for which he was promoted to the rank of commander. He also served with distinction in actions in the Mediterranean and Red Seas, in the Arabian Gulf and in the Indian Ocean. He served in the 110-gun ship *Ville de Paris*, the 98-gun ship *Queen*, the 74-gun ship *Mars*, and on the 5th of April, 1811, he was appointed to the command of the new 38-gun frigate *Macedonian*. When the *United States* and the *Macedonian* were at anchor in Norfolk, a few months before the War of 1812, their commanders frequently interchanged visits, and one day, while Captain Carden was dining aboard the *United States*, he remarked, after pointing out the superiority of the British frigates: "Besides, Decatur, though your ships may be good enough, and you are a clever set of fellows, what practice have you had in war? There is the rub!"[1]

As Captain Carden was about to deliver his sword to Captain Decatur, the latter refused to receive it, saying, "Sir, I can not receive the sword of a man who has so bravely defended his ship." It was the frequent manifestation of this magnanimous spirit toward a fallen foe that secured for our navy the respect and esteem of the world. The flush of pride mantles the

[1] Mackenzie's Life of Decatur, p. 157.

cheek of every American quite as much for this noble quality displayed by our naval heroes as for their brilliant victories. Well might it be said that they not only captured the enemy's ships but won their hearts as well! In a private letter Captain Decatur expresses a manly sympathy for Captain Carden, when he wrote: "One half of the satisfaction arising from this victory is destroyed in seeing the mortification of poor Carden, who deserved success as much as we did who had the good fortune to obtain it." No trouble was spared in alleviating the sufferings of the prisoners, and such were the kindness and delicacy of Captain Decatur's bearing toward the British commander and his officers that he won their heartfelt gratitude. All their private property, and even that of the common seamen in the *Macedonian*, were returned or its equivalent in money, including the eight hundred dollars' worth of wine purchased at Madeira a few days before. "I have much gratitude to express to you, my dear sir, for all your kindnesses, and all my officers feel it equally with myself. If ever we should turn the tables, we will endeavor, if possible, to improve on your unusual goodness."[1] Captain Brenton, in his History of the English Navy, says: "Captain Decatur, who commanded the *United States*, behaved to his prisoners in a manner so honorable and humane as to entitle him not only to the thanks of Captain Carden and his officers, but also to the grateful record of history."

The American crew was perhaps as fine a set of fellows as ever trod a gun deck. Most of them had been under Captain Decatur many years, having followed him from ship to ship. The same is true of his officers, the first lieutenant, William Henry Allen, having served under him five years. Thus the officers and men had become thoroughly acquainted with one another's habits, methods of discipline and navigation, which, when

[1] Letter from Captain Carden to Captain Decatur.

we remember that every commander has his own peculiar ideas of routine, is an item of consideration. It had been Decatur's highest ambition to bring his ship's company under the best possible training, and the result of his efforts was seen in the quiet rapidity and perfect self-possession with which each man performed his part. The spirit of their commander seemed to pervade the entire company, every order being carried out with as much precision as if it were performed in the security of a friendly port. Captain Decatur was a strict disciplinarian, but, unlike the British commander, he had won the affection of his crew. Decatur was simple and unaffected in his bearing toward those around him. He was five feet ten inches high, and had a somewhat slender figure, a long face, prominent, restless eyes, dark skin, and black hair. He is described by one of the British seamen who was taken abroad the *United States* soon after the *Macedonian* surrendered as "wearing an old straw hat and a plain suit of clothes, which made him look more like a farmer than a naval hero."

An incident occurred in the *United States* just as she was about to engage the *Macedonian* which illustrates the enthusiasm of the crew and their unbounded confidence in Captain Decatur. A lad, named Jack Creamer, had been permitted to go on the present cruise, although his tender age disqualified him from regular enlistment in the American service. Cap in hand, he timidly approached the sacred precincts of the quarter-deck, where Captain Decatur, surrounded by his aids, was intently watching the approach of the British frigate. After gaining his commander's attention the boy said: "Commodore, will you please, sir, have my name put down on the muster roll?" Being asked the reason of this strange request, the little fellow replied, "So I can draw my share of the prize money, sir." The far-sighted young financier accordingly had his name enrolled. While the battle was in progress,

Captain Decatur visited different parts of the ship, personally inspecting the divisions and encouraging his men. Observing that the enemy's rigging was being cut to pieces, he remarked to the captain of a gun on the main deck: "Aim at that yellow streak along her side. Her spars and rigging are going fast enough; she must have a little more hulling." At another time an American gunner noticing the mizzenmast of the British frigate fall over the starboard quarter, said to a shipmate, "Ay, Bill, we have made a brig of her." Overhearing the remark, Captain Decatur replied, "Take good aim, my lad, and she will be a sloop," and such good aim did they take that her main topmast soon went over.

Decatur spoke in the highest terms of his officers, and especially of Lieutenants Allen and John Musser Funck. The latter was mortally wounded, and died a few hours after the battle. The names of the officers of the *United States* in this action are: William Henry Allen, first lieuteuant; John Gallagher, John Musser Funck, George Campbell Read, Walter Wooster and John B. Nicholson, lieutenants; John D. Sloat, sailing-master; Samuel R. Trevitt, surgeon; Samuel Vernon, surgeon's mate; John B. Timberlake, purser; William Anderson, James L. Edwards, lieutenants of marines; John Stansbury, Joseph Cassin, Philip Voorhees, John P. Zantzinger, Richard Delphy, Dugan Taylor, Richard S. Heath, Edward F. Howell, Archibald Hamilton, John N. Carr, H. Z. W. Harrington, William Jamieson, Lewis Hinchman and Benjamin S. Williams, midshipmen. Thomas Barry was the gunner.

The duration of this action is a subject of controversy. Captain Decatur merely says that "after an action of an hour and a half" the *Macedonian* struck. James says that the action began "about 9h. 20m. A. M." Concerning its termination he says: "By a few minutes past 11 A. M." the *Macedonian* was com-

pletely wrecked, and "owing to the heavy sea and her dismasted state she rolled her main-deck guns under water, while the *United States*, having no sail that she could not set but her mizzen topgallant sail, remained perfectly steady." This very clearly shows that it would have been impossible for the *Macedonian* at a "few minutes past 11 A. M." to make further resistance. It is improbable that Captain Carden contemplated such a course, for, from the moment the *United States* ceased firing, a "few minutes past 11 A. M.," according to Mr. James, until she returned at noon to receive the surrender of the *Macedonian*, the latter did not make the slightest resistance. From the figures of this authority it appears that the *Macedonian* was beaten in about one hour and forty minutes. When we make allowance for Mr. James' bias on the subject, we find that his "about 9h. 20m. A. M." and by a "few minutes past 11 A. M." practically corroborates Captain Decatur's general statement that the action lasted one hour and thirty minutes.

The *Macedonian*, as we have seen, is acknowledged by English writers to have been "one of the finest frigates in the British navy." She was not built of fir, like many British frigates of her time, but was of the best oak. She was ten feet shorter than the *United States*, but had eight inches more beam, and she was of the "same class as the *Guerrière*,"[1] which ship, we are told by James himself, was rated among the "large 38s." "Such was the confidence of victory on board the *Macedonian*, that every officer, man and boy was in the highest spirits."[2] The *United States* mounted thirty-two long 24-pounders and twenty-two short 42-pounders, in all fifty-four guns. Deducting the seven per cent for deficient weight of American metal, we have a total of seven hundred and eighty-seven pounds

[1] Hughes' History of England, vol. xiv, p. 19.

[2] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 395.

to the broadside. The *Macedonian*, according to English accounts, carried twenty-eight long 18-pounders, eighteen short 32-pounders, one long 12-pounder and two long 9-pounders, giving a total of forty-nine guns and five hundred and fifty-five pounds of metal to the broadside. Out of a crew of two hundred and ninety-seven,[1] she lost thirty-six killed and sixty-eight wounded, among the latter being Third-Lieutenant John Bulford and three midshipmen;[2] total, one hundred and four. The *United States*, out of her crew of four hundred and seventy-eight, lost five killed and seven wounded,[3] two of the wounded afterward dying, making a total loss of twelve.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
United States:	54	787	478	5	7	12	Time, 1h.30m.
Macedonian:	49	555	297	36	68	104	

In this action the *United States* sustained a surprisingly small amount of damage. With the exception of her mizzen topgallantmast her spars remained intact, while her hull was struck only three times. The *Macedonian*, on the other hand, was completely dismantled, so that "with the profusion of stores of every sort which was to be found on board the American frigate, with so many able seamen that could be spared from her numerous crew, and with all the advantages that a fortnight's calm weather gave, it took the whole of that time to place the prize in a seaworthy state—a clear proof how much the *Macedonian* had been shattered."[4]

Although the *Macedonian* had been captured, she was still a long distance from an American port, and had to run a gantlet of British cruisers before reach-

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 398.
[2] Official report of Captain Carden.
[3] Official report of Captain Decatur.
[4] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 402.

ing the American coast. First-Lieutenant Allen, of the *United States*, was put in charge of her, and after nearly two weeks spent in making repairs the vessels took up their course toward the United States. Early in December they sighted the coast of Rhode Island, and succeeded in evading British cruisers stationed at that point; and on the 4th of December they arrived in New London and Newport, whence they proceeded to New York by the Hell Gate passage.

As might be expected, the rejoicings occasioned by the news of this second naval victory raised the national pride to a dangerous height. Congress voted Captain Decatur a gold medal, and to each of his officers a silver one, while many resolutions, swords and receptions were tendered by State legislatures and municipal corporations. The Legislature of Virginia presented Lieutenants William Henry Allen and John B. Nicholson with swords, and the former was promoted to the rank of master-commandant. A public ball was given to Captain Decatur, January 2, 1813, at Gibson's City Hotel, New York, and the decorations on that occasion were said to have surpassed anything of the kind ever attempted before. The hall had the appearance of a marine palace. Around it was a colonnade formed of the masts of ships, entwined with laurels and bearing the flags of all the nations of the world. Five days afterward a dinner was given in the same place and with the same decorations to the crew of the *United States* by the Corporation of New York City, but the miniature frigate which decorated the center of one of the tables was floated in grog instead of water. The following account of this banquet is given by an eyewitness:

"The crew was landed at New Slip precisely at two o'clock, and marched in good order through Pearl and Wall Streets and Broadway, preceded by a band of music and amid the loud and reiterated huzzas of their fellow-citizens. On their arrival at the hotel they were ushered into the room by the committee of the Cor-

poration and took their seats with perfect regularity at the call of the boatswain's whistle, while the band struck up the inspiring tune of Yankee Doodle. After this, a handsome address was delivered by Alderman Vanderbilt, to which the boatswain replied in nearly the following words: 'In behalf of my shipmates I return our sincere thanks to the Corporation of the City of New York for the honor which it has this day done us. Rest assured that it will be always our wish to deserve the good opinion of our countrymen.' When the boatswain had finished this reply, his shipmates, in token of their approbation, made the room ring with three hearty cheers. At this moment the mainsail of a ship forty-six feet wide by thirty-six feet high, which had been hung at the back of the room, was suddenly furled and revealed a transparent painting exhibiting our three glorious naval victories. It is impossible for pen to describe the scene that followed. All the fierce enthusiasm of the battle they had recently been through was roused again, and, jumping on their chairs and some standing on the table, they gave vent to three savage yells of victory. For a few minutes the din was deafening, but silence finally being secured by the boatswain's whistle, the crew of four hundred and more men began to lay aboard the excellent dinner in true man-of-war style. After dinner the boatswain piped for silence, when the president gave the following toast: 'American ships all over the ocean.' Captain Decatur and his first lieutenant, Mr. Allen, shortly afterward entered the room, and were received by the seamen in a manner that showed how deep and sincere was their affection for their commander. Captain Decatur gave the following toast: 'Free trade and no impressment.' After their commander had retired, a variety of volunteer toasts was given in true nautical style, and at six o'clock the men, obedient to the boatswain's whistle, adjourned to the theater. The jolly tars marched in regular procession,

in compliance with an invitation from the managers. The front of the theater was illuminated, and exhibited a transparency of the engagement between the *United States* and the *Macedonian*. The house was more crowded than was ever known before. The pit was entirely occupied by the gallant crew of the frigate *United States*."

The *Macedonian* was refitted, and in the following June she sailed with the *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur, and the *Hornet*, Master-Commandant James Biddle. While working up Long Island Sound the *United States* was struck by lightning and narrowly escaped blowing up. The bolt shattered the royal mast, bringing down Captain Decatur's broad pennant, and, passing along the conductor on the outside of the hull, it was attracted by a gun into one of the main-deck ports and from there it went down the wardroom hatch, skirting the magazine scuttle, entered the surgeon's room, put his light out, tore up his bed, and, descending between the side and the ceiling, it went out at the water's edge, tearing away a portion of the copper. At that moment the *Macedonian* was directly astern of the flagship, and, fearing an explosion, Captain Jacob Jones threw all aback ; but the lightning caused no further damage. This squadron, however, had scarcely cleared the land when it was driven back by two 74-gun ships and a frigate, and taking refuge in New London it was blockaded in that port until the close of the war. The *Hornet*, however, managed to get to sea early in 1815, and the story of her interesting cruise will be told in another chapter. In March, 1813, Captain Carden and the surviving officers and men of the *Macedonian* being exchanged, were sent to Bermuda, where Captain Carden was tried by court-martial for the loss of his ship, and was honorably acquitted. On the 17th of August, 1840, he was made a rear-admiral of the Red. The colors of the *Macedonian* may be seen in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONSTITUTION–JAVA FIGHT.

The result of the first and second actions between American and English frigates and the enthusiasm aroused by this arm of the service induced the Government to change the timorous policy, which characterized it at the beginning of hostilities, to a bold and far-reaching plan of operations on the high seas. Several expeditions were organized with a view of striking the enemy in distant parts of the globe; and by having frigates well provisioned for long cruises, so that they would not be obliged to put into port except at unfrequented places, the Americans hoped to compel the British navy to spread out its forces and to draw many of its cruisers from their coast. In pursuance of this policy a squadron was fitted out under the command of Captain William Bainbridge with orders to sail for the Indian Ocean and to cruise against English commerce in the East Indies. Captain Bainbridge was one of the most experienced and trusted officers in the navy. The clever artifice by which he saved the *Norfolk* and the *Montezuma* from a French squadron in 1798, his subsequent brilliant career as commander of the *Norfolk*, and his long imprisonment at Guadeloupe and Tripoli, have already been narrated. His squadron consisted of the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, flagship; the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, Captain David Porter; and the 18-gun ship-sloop *Hornet*, Master-Commandant James Lawrence. The *Constitution* and the *Hornet* sailed from Boston on the 26th of October, while the *Essex* put to sea from the Delaware two days earlier,

having been informed about various places at which she was to meet the other ships.

Seventeen days after the American squadron put to sea the British 38-gun frigate *Java*, Captain Henry Lambert, sailed from Portsmouth, England, for India, having under her protection two richly laden merchant ships. The *Java*, formerly the 40-gun frigate *Renommée*,[1] was captured from the French off Madagascar in the latter part of February, 1811, at which time, says James, she was a "new frigate" and "of the first class,"[2] and on being taken into the British navy she was named *Java*. At the time of sailing on her long voyage for India she had received a thorough overhauling and was newly fitted. She was laden with stores for the 74-gun ship of the line *Cornwallis* and the 10-gun sloops of war *Chameleon* and *Icarus*, then fitting at Bombay. Captain Lambert, the commander of the *Java*, "one of our most distinguished officers,"[3] had a high reputation for seamanship. He entered the British navy as a midshipman under Admiral Robert Man, and early in 1798 he sailed in the frigate *Virginie* for the East Indies, where he was transferred to the 74-gun ship of the line *Suffolk*. He rose rapidly in his profession, and in 1804, while commanding the 32-gun frigate *Wilhelmina*, gained wide celebrity by beating off the French frigate-built privateer *Psyche*, after two and a half hours of desperate fighting. The *Wilhelmina* mounted eighteen 9-pounders, and the *Psyche* twenty-four 12-pounders and ten heavy carronades. In the following year Captain Lambert, in command of the frigate *St. Fiorenzo*, after a long chase captured the *Psyche*.

But Captain Lambert made his great reputation as commander of the frigate *Iphigenia*. Having under

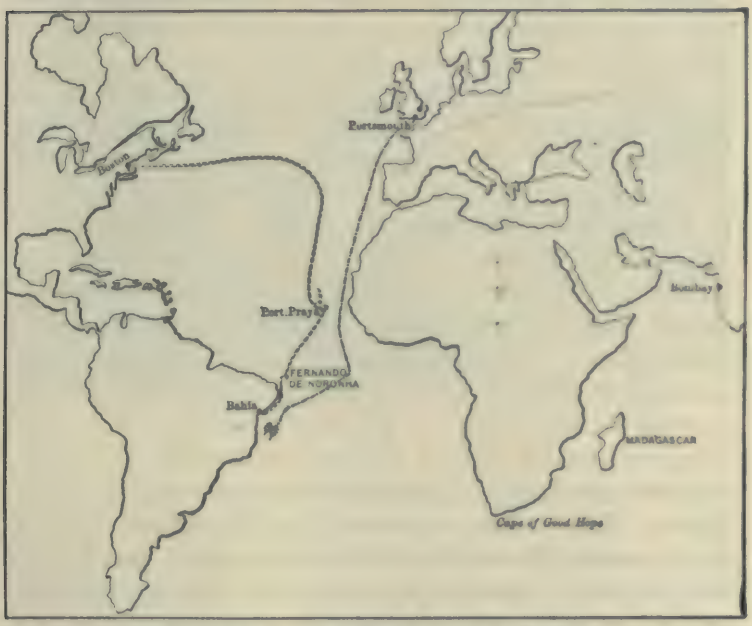
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[1] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. ii, p. 359.

[2] Marshall's Royal Naval Biography, vol. iv, p. 834.

[3] Brenton's History of the English Navy, vol. ii, p. 46.

his orders the frigates *Leopard* and *Magicienne*, the sloop *Sapphire* and the brig *Staunch*, he blockaded the Isles of France and Bourbon during the hurricane months, "which had never before been attempted."[1] Afterward the *Iphigenia*, with the *Magicienne*, the *Sirius* and the *Néréide*, made a daring attack on the French squadron in Grande Port, and in his operations at l'Isle de la Passe Captain Lambert showed his great



Cruise of the Constitution, Hornet and Java.

abilities as a naval officer, and in August, 1812, he was placed in command of the *Java*. The first lieutenant of the *Java*, Henry Ducie Chads, was also an officer of no mean experience and reputation. He had been conspicuous for his gallantry in the affair of l'Isle de la Passe, and so conscious was Captain Lambert of the lieutenant's ability that when placed in command of

[1] Marshall's Royal Naval Biography, vol. v, p. 238.

the *Java* he especially requested that Mr. Chads, then serving in the *Semiramis*, might be made the senior lieutenant in the *Java*. The *Java* had as passengers Lieutenant-General Thomas Hislop, the recently appointed Governor of India, Captain Wood, Captain John Marshall, of the British navy, Major Walker, James Saunders, a lieutenant in the navy, and one hundred supernumeraries, so that she sailed with the distinction of having two navy captains, besides other extra sea officers whose services might become valuable in case she met an enemy.

In due time the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* arrived at Port Praya, the first rendezvous, but nothing was seen of the *Essex*, and at Fernando de Noronha Captain Bainbridge again failed to meet her. In order to deceive the enemy as much as possible, the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* appeared at these ports under the assumed names of the British frigates *Acasta* and *Morgiana*, while Captain David Porter was to figure as Sir James Yeo, of the 32-gun frigate *Southampton*. Despairing of falling in with the *Essex* at these places, Captain Bainbridge wrote a letter containing some commonplace matter, and on the back of it wrote in "sympathetic ink" orders for the future movements of the *Essex*. This letter, addressed to "Sir James Yeo of his Britannic Majesty's ship *Southampton*," was left at the last rendezvous to await the arrival of Captain Porter, while the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* made for the coast of Brazil, preparatory to doubling the Cape of Good Hope, and arrived off Bahia (St. Salvador) on the 13th of December. Not wishing to have it known to the people on shore that the *Constitution* was thereabout, Captain Bainbridge sent the *Hornet* into the harbor to communicate with the American consul, Mr. Hill, and from him Master-Commandant Lawrence learned that the British sloop of war *Bonne Citoyenne*, Captain P. B. Greene, was in port and was about to transport a large amount of specie to England.

The *Bonne Citoyenne* is described as having been "one of the finest sloops of war in the service." It was this ship that had created such a "tempest in a teapot" a few years before, at Gibraltar. Lord Dundonald



Bahia.

was anxious to secure the command of her, but by the influence of the Admiralty it was given to the brother of Lord Keith's secretary.[1] She carried eighteen short 32-pounders and two long 9-pounders. In August, 1809, after an action of seven hours, she captured *la Furieuse*, "a French frigate of the largest class," having her "full complement of officers and two hundred seamen, with a colonel, two lieutenants and a detachment of the Sixty-sixth Regiment of the line."[2] *La Furieuse* carried twelve short 42-pounders, two long 24-pounders and six guns of a smaller caliber. Afterward she was taken into the British navy and

[1] Autobiography of Lord Dundonald, vol. ii, p. 92.

[2] Brenton's History of the English Navy, vol. ii, p. 258.

was classed as a 36-gun frigate. The *Hornet* carried eighteen short 32-pounders and two long 12-pounders, which made her equal to the *Bonne Citoyenne* in weight of metal.

Desirous of bringing on an action with this ship, Master-Commandant Lawrence sent a challenge through the American consul to Captain Greene, pledging on his part that the *Constitution* would sail away so as to make it impossible for her to interfere. "When I last saw you I stated to you my wish to meet the *Bonne Citoyenne*, and authorized you to make my wish known to Captain Greene. I now request you to state to him that I will be pleased to come out, and pledge my honor that neither the *Constitution* nor any other American vessel shall interfere." Captain Bainbridge supplemented this letter with a note in which he said: "If Captain Greene wishes to try equal force, I pledge my honor to give him an opportunity, by being out of the way or not interfering." But Captain Greene declined the challenge, saying: "I am convinced, sir, if such a rencounter were to take place, the result could not long be dubious, and would terminate favorably to the ship which I have the honor to command; but I am equally convinced that Captain Bainbridge could not swerve so much from the duty he owes his country as to become an inactive spectator, and to see a ship belonging to the very squadron under his orders fall into the hands of an enemy. This reason operates powerfully on my mind for not exposing the *Bonne Citoyenne* to a risk upon terms so manifestly disadvantageous as those proposed by Captain Bainbridge. Indeed, nothing could give me greater satisfaction than complying with the wishes of Master-Commandant Lawrence, and I earnestly hope that chance will afford him an opportunity of meeting the *Bonne Citoyenne* under different circumstances, to enable him to distinguish himself in the manner he is now so desirous of doing. I further assure you that

my ship will at all times be prepared, wherever she may be, to repel any attacks made against her and I shall also act offensively whenever I judge it proper to do so."[1] "To make him easy on this point, Captain Bainbridge left the *Hornet* four days together off the harbor in which the *Bonne Citoyenne* lay, and from which he could see that he was not within forty miles. He afterward went into the harbor and remained there three days, where he might have been detained twenty-four hours, at the request of Captain Greene, if disposed to combat the *Hornet*."[2] Finding Captain Greene determined not to fight, Master-Commandant Lawrence rejoined the *Constitution* in the offing, resolved at all events to prevent the *Bonne Citoyenne* from sailing on her intended voyage; and on the 26th of December the *Constitution*, leaving the *Hornet* to blockade Captain Greene, stood out to sea.

Four days after Christmas, while the *Constitution* was about thirty miles from the coast in latitude 13° 6′ South, longitude 38° West, the wind being light from the east by northeast, Captain Bainbridge discovered two sails on his weather bow. By ten o'clock it was seen that the strangers were full-rigged ships, one standing in for the land, while the other was making for the *Constitution*. They were the *Java* and her prize the American merchant ship *William*, which she had captured two weeks before. After leaving Spithead the *Java* touched at Port Praya, where she heard that the *Essex* was expected. Soon afterward she chased and overhauled the *William*. On the 24th of December, being short of water and not able to get at the supply he had, on account of the heavy articles with which the hold was stowed, Captain Lambert determined to touch at Bahia, and altered his course accordingly; but the two Indiamen, not wishing to go

[1] Captain Greene to the British consul, Frederick Landeman.

[2] Washington Irving, Spanish Papers, vol. ii, p. 42.

so far out of the course, continued on their way. At daylight, December 29th, the *Java* sighted the Brazilian coast and soon afterward descried the *Constitution*, Captain Lambert at first believing her to be the *Essex*.

At 11 A. M. Captain Bainbridge took in his royals and tacked to the southeast, and half an hour later he hoisted the private signal of the day, but finding that it was not answered he cleared for action. Wishing to draw the enemy from his supposed consort, he set his mainsails and royals and stood from the land. At noon he showed his colors, the broad pennant at the main, the Stars and Stripes at the peak, another at the main topgallant mast and the American jack at the fore. At 12.15 P. M. the enemy hoisted an ensign at the mizzen peak, and a union jack at the mizzen topgallant masthead, lashing another to the main rigging, while a private signal was made at the masthead. At 1.06 P. M., finding that the enemy had "the advantage of her in sailing,"[1] the *Constitution* took in her mainsail and royals, went about and stood for the Englishman. About 2 P. M. the enemy hauled down all his colors except the union jack at the mizzen masthead. At this time he was about a mile to windward, when Captain Bainbridge fired a gun from the third division of his main-deck battery across the *Java's* bow in order to induce her to show her colors again. The shot had the desired effect, the enemy immediately rehoisting all his flags and firing a broadside in return. Thereupon the *Constitution* fired her port guns, the shot splashing the water harmlessly against the enemy's hull.

At 2.10 P. M.,[2] when the ships were half a mile apart, the *Constitution* opened fire from her port battery.

[1] Official report of the British commander.

[2] Official report of Captain Bainbridge; also official report of the British commander.

The enemy did not immediately reply, but when within pistol shot delivered a starboard broadside. The two frigates then ran along side by side, delivering and receiving a tremendous fire. At 2.25 P. M. the ships passed each other on opposite tacks and shifted their gun crews. Captain Bainbridge was anxious to come to close quarters, but as the British frigate held the weather gage, besides having the superiority in sailing, in the prevailing light wind he could not do this without exposing his ship to a raking broadside. About 2.28 P. M. a cannon shot smashed the *Constitution's* wheel into splinters, which rendered her steering extremely difficult throughout the rest of the action, and the same shot drove a small copper bolt into Captain Bainbridge's thigh, inflicting a painful wound. A short time before this he had been injured by a musket ball, but fearful of dampening the ardor of his crew by going below, he kept the quarter-deck and continued to direct the battle. He was a man of imposing build, and when aroused to action his manner inspired confidence and enthusiasm in all around him. He was about six feet high, with a well-proportioned, muscular frame, and had an unusually piercing eye. He was severe in discipline, but tempered it with much consideration for the men. The loss of the wheel was a serious mishap, as the English vessel, being strongly manned, was handled with great dexterity; this, together with her superiority of sailing, made her a nimble and dangerous foe. The enemy took advantage of the situation by endeavoring to rake, which caused a succession of rapid manœuvres, so that in a short time the ships were several miles to leeward of the point where they first came into action. After the loss of the wheel the Americans worked the tiller by means of tackles two decks below, which made it exceedingly awkward, because the men at the tiller could not see the sails, and orders had to be transmitted by a line of midshipmen, making them peculiarly liable to confu-

sion. About 2.30 the *Java* succeeded in running across the *Constitution's* stern and poured in a raking broadside, but in so doing relinquished the weather gage. Captain Bainbridge, however, did not avail himself of this advantage, but ran with the wind free on the port tack. The *Java* quickly luffed up and again raked with her starboard guns, but at too great a distance to be effective.

At 2.40 P. M. Captain Bainbridge determined to come to close quarters at any cost, and setting his fore and main sails he boldly headed his frigate for the enemy, exposing her to a fore-and-aft fire. But for some unexplained reason the British did not improve their opportunity, and when broadsides should have raked the *Constitution* from stem to stern, only one 9-pounder was discharged. Having brought his ship into close quarters, Captain Bainbridge opened afresh from the starboard battery. The effect of the American guns at close quarters was dreadful. In a few minutes the enemy lost his jib boom and bowsprit, while his running rigging was so injured as to deprive him of the superiority of sailing for the rest of the action. Availing herself of this advantage, the *Constitution* wore in the smoke, and the Englishmen did not discover the manœuvre until it was nearly completed, when they hove in stays, hoping to get around quickly enough to avoid a raking. But their ship, having lost her bowsprit and jib boom, hung a long time and received from the American, not more than two cables' lengths off, a disastrous fire which swept their decks fore and aft. The *Constitution* now took a position off her opponent's bow and poured in a diagonal fire, so that at 3.05 P. M. the enemy's foremast was carried away by the board, and in falling it passed through the forecastle and main deck.

Finding that his situation was becoming desperate, the British commander made an attempt to board, but owing to the dismantled condition of his ship he was

unable to do so. His foremast had fallen over the forecastle and encumbered many of the guns on the main deck, his maintopmast fell soon afterward, shot away just above the cap, the stump of his bowsprit was carried away, and fifteen minutes later his gaff and spanker boom went over the side. The ships were so close together at this moment that the remains of the enemy's bowsprit, passing over the *Constitution's* stern, became entangled with the starboard mizzen rigging, so that the Englishman was forced up to the wind. At the time the enemy was expected to board, Lieutenant John C. Alwyn, who had been sailing-master in the *Constitution* during her action with the *Guerrière* and had been promoted for his gallantry on that occasion, promptly answered to the call for boarders, and when on the quarter-deck hammock cloths, in the act of discharging his pistol, he received a ball through the same shoulder that had been injured in the action with the *Guerrière*. Although suffering great pain, he remained at his post till the close of the battle. Shortly after Lieutenant Alwyn fell, a marine in the *Constitution's* maintop, observing the British commander, shot him through the breast. The *Java's* surgeon, Thomas Cooke Jones, says: "I saw him [Captain Lambert] almost immediately afterward, and found that the ball had entered his left side under the clavicle, fracturing the first rib, the splinters of which had severely lacerated the lungs. I put my finger in the wound, detached and extricated several pieces of the bone. He said that he felt no annoyance from the wound in his breast, but complained of pain extending the whole length of his spine." The command of the *Java* now devolved on Lieutenant Chads, who, with the assistance of Captain John Marshall, Lieutenant James Saunders and other officers who were in the frigate as passengers, continued the battle with great bravery.

By 3.30 P. M. the fire of the British frigate had perceptibly slackened, although the guns that were still

mounted were handled with spirit. At 3.55 P. M. Captain Bainbridge had the satisfaction of seeing his antagonist's mizzenmast go by the board, and the wreck hanging over the engaged side caught fire from the enemy's own guns. From 3.30 P. M. until the *Java's* mizzenmast went over, the *Constitution* "lay on our starboard quarter, pouring in a tremendous, galling fire, while on our side we could never get more than two or three guns to bear, and frequently none at all."[1] At 4.05 P. M. the English frigate was "an unmanageable wreck."[2] Her fire for some time had ceased, six of her quarter-deck guns, four on her forecastle and many on the main deck were disabled by the wreck of her masts hanging over them, her fore and mizzen masts and bowsprit were carried away, her mainmast was tottering and no flag was visible. "Having effectually done her work" the *Constitution* drew away to repair her rigging, which was considerably damaged, leaving "us a perfect wreck, with only our mainmast standing and the main yards gone in the slings. Every exertion was made by us during this interval to place the ship in a state to renew the action. We succeeded in clearing the wreck of our masts from the guns, and endeavored to get before the wind by setting sails on the stumps of the bowsprit and foremast. Got the main tack forward, the weather yardarm remaining aloft; cleared away the booms, and got a topgallantmast out and commenced rigging it for a jury foremast, intending to set a lower steering sail for a foresail. Before we could get this accomplished we were obliged to cut away the mainmast to prevent its falling inboard from the heavy rolling of the ship."[3]

Seeing that the American frigate was out of gunshot, engaged in repairing her rigging, the surviving

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[1] Subsequent account of Lieutenant Chads.

[2] Official report of the British commander.

[3] Subsequent account of Lieutenant Chads.



Action between the Constitution and the Java.

Englishmen tacked a flag to the stump of their mizzenmast and rigged a square sail to the wreck of the foremast, so that they could report to the Admiralty, "We still awaited the attack of the enemy." "The enemy," in the meantime, having spliced her rigging, with all her masts sound, with every gun in place and reloaded, bore down at 5.25 P. M. on the wreck. Hereupon the surviving Englishmen seemed to think better of their resolution to "await the attack of the enemy," for they struck at the first summons. At this moment John Cheever, one of the American seamen who had been mortally wounded in the action, hearing that the enemy had struck, raised himself with one hand, and, giving three feeble cheers, expired. His brother, Joseph P. Cheever, also was killed in this battle. Immediately upon the surrender of the enemy, First-Lieutenant George Parker, of the *Constitution*, was sent aboard to take possession. On sighting the American frigate, the *Java's* prize, the *William*, made directly for Bahia and was captured by the *Hornet*.

By placing twenty men in the *William*, the *Java's* crew, at the time of her action with the *Constitution*, according to English accounts, was reduced to three hundred and seventy-seven men, including the supernumerary list. That the *Java's* passengers were actively engaged in the fight is seen in Lieutenant Chads' official report, when he says: "To Captain John Marshall, of the royal navy, who was a passenger, I am particularly obliged for his exertions and advice throughout the action. Lieutenant-General Hislop, Major Walker and Captain Wood of his staff, the latter of whom was wounded, were solicitous to assist and remained on the quarter-deck." James Saunders, another passenger and a lieutenant in the royal navy, commanded the forecastle. But there are reasons for believing that the *Java* carried more men than the English accounts give her. Captain Bainbridge re-

ported that he released on parole three hundred and sixty-one officers, seamen, marines and boys, besides eight passengers and nine Portuguese seamen, making three hundred and seventy-eight people in the ship. The *Java*'s losses are admitted to have been twenty-two killed and one hundred and two wounded. Adding the number of killed to the number of prisoners released on parole by Captain Bainbridge, we have four hundred. After the action the *Java's* muster roll, bearing the date of November 17, 1812, was discovered, which showed that four hundred and forty-six persons were in her when she sailed from England, twenty of whom were put in the *William*, thus leaving the *Java* at the time of the action with four hundred and twenty-six souls.

The number of the *Java's* killed and wounded as given in the official report of Lieutenant Chads also is open to question. A letter was found in the *Constitution* after the prisoners were landed, addressed to Lieutenant Peter V. Wood, Twenty-second Regiment, foot, signed by Lieutenant H. D. Carnick and dated January 1, 1813, which said that sixty were killed and one hundred and seventy were wounded. After referring to the death of a friend, Lieutenant Carnick adds: "Four others of my messmates shared the same fate, together with sixty killed and one hundred and seventy wounded." As Lieutenant Carnick could not have had so good an opportunity for estimating the *Java*'s loss as Captain Bainbridge had—which remark applies equally to Lieutenant Chads—we are justified in accepting Captain Bainbridge's statement of the *Java's* loss, which is the mean between the British accounts, as follows: sixty killed and one hundred and one wounded. Among the latter were First-Lieutenant Chads, Mr. Robertson the sailing-master and Lieutenant Davis, of the marines. The *Constitution's* complement numbered four hundred and eighty, of whom she lost nine killed and twenty-five wounded.

The official reports on both sides agree that this third frigate action began at 2.10 P. M. At 4.05 P. M.,[1] when the *Constitution* left the *Java*, the latter was a "perfect wreck, with only her mainmast standing, and that tottering, her main yard gone in the slings, and the muzzles of her guns dipping in the water from the heavy rolling of the ship in consequence of her dismasted state."[2] On the other hand, "considering that the loss of her [the *Constitution*'s] main topsail yards, with some cut rigging, was the only injury she had sustained," there can be no doubt that the *Java* at this time was incapable of making further resistance. This determines the duration of the action at one hundred and fifteen minutes by Captain Bainbridge's figures, one hundred and thirty-five by James', and one hundred and forty-five according to Lieutenant Chads.

Since her engagement with the *Guerrière*, the *Constitution* had changed her armament so that she now carried thirty-two long 24-pounders and twenty-two short 42-pounders, a total of fifty-four guns, aggregating seven hundred and eighty-seven pounds of metal, after deducting seven per cent for deficiency in the weight of American shot, to the broadside. For reasons given in the introduction, the *Java* will be considered as still mounting her French guns. According to English authorities, she carried on this occasion twenty-eight long 18-pounders, sixteen short 32-pounders, two long 9-pounders, and one short 18-pounder, giving a total of forty-seven guns and five hundred and sixty-eight English pounds of metal to the broadside.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Constitution:	54	787	480	9	25	34	Time 1h. 55m.
Java:	47	568	426	60	101	161	

[1] Journal of Captain Bainbridge. Lieutenant Chads gives it at 4.35 P. M., while James says 4.25 P. M.

[2] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 414.

With the exception of her main topsail yard the *Constitution* came out of the action with her royal yards across, and every spar, from the highest to the lowest, in place, while the injuries to her hull were trifling. Her rigging was considerably cut up, but her masts and spars, although wounded, did not even require fishing. One 18-pound shot passed through her mizzenmast, her foremast was slightly wounded, while the mainmast was untouched. The *Java*, which, as compared with the *Constitution*, was a new frigate, was "totally dismasted."[1] Stick after stick had been shot out of her until nothing was left but a few stumps. The foremast had been shot away twice, once near the cat-harpings and again much nearer the deck. She was so shattered that it was impossible to get her even to Bahia, and on the following day she was blown up. On the same day that this battle was fought and at the precise hour when the *Java* lay a rolling hulk on the ocean, and the crew of the *Constitution* were busily engaged washing the blood stains from the decks with hot vinegar, or attending to the wounded, burying the dead and putting the ship in order for action again, five hundred men sat down to a banquet at Gibson's City Hotel, New York city, over which De Witt Clinton presided, in honor of the victories of Captain Isaac Hull, Captain Stephen Decatur and Master-Commandant Jacob Jones.

A short time before the *Java* was blown up Captain Lambert, who had been delirious during the night from his dreadful wound, was removed from his cabin and taken aboard the *Constitution*. This removal was attended with much difficulty, for, although the two frigates lay near together, the seas were running high and the boat in which the wounded veteran was placed was tossed about in an alarming manner. The short passage from the wreck to the American frigate was watched

[1] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. ii, p. 414.

with painful interest by the survivors in both ships, and when the boat finally came under the *Constitution's* lee and the delirious Lambert was tenderly lifted aboard a sigh of relief escaped many. The day after the arrival of the *Constitution* in Bahia a touching interview took place on the quarter-deck of the American frigate between Captain Bainbridge and Captain Lambert. The British commander was lying in his cot under the shade of an awning when Captain Bainbridge, who was still in a critical condition from his wound, approached, supported by two of his officers, and returned the sword to the dying Englishman. This meeting of the two heroes left a kindlier feeling between their crews. In January Captain Lambert was landed at Bahia, where more comfortable quarters were provided for him. He lingered several days, delirious, and muttering incoherently about the loss of his ship. "Our unhappy situation seemed to produce reflections which entered uppermost in his discordant mind, on which he raved till he was completely exhausted. At night [of the fifth day] he became totally insensible and fell into a disturbed slumber. The organs of respiration performed their office with difficulty; at every gasp the air issued from the wound with a peculiar noise; his pulse grew faint, and a few minutes before ten o'clock he breathed his last."[1]

The characteristic kindness of the American officers brought forth the following letter from Lieutenant-General Hislop to Captain Bainbridge: "I am justly penetrated with the fullest sense of your very handsome and kind treatment ever since the fate of war placed me in your power, and I beg once more to renew to you my sincere acknowledgments for the same." In his official report to the Admiralty, Lieutenant Chads wrote: "I can not conclude this letter without expressing my grateful ac-

[1] Letter of Thomas Cooke Jones, the *Java's* surgeon.

knowledgments thus publicly for the generous treatment Captain Lambert and his officers have experienced from our gallant enemy Captain Bainbridge and his officers."

Captain Bainbridge spoke in the highest terms of the conduct of his officers and men who were engaged in this action. He said: "Should I attempt to do justice by representations of the brave and good conduct of all my officers and crew during the action, I should fail in the attempt; therefore suffice it to say, that the whole of their conduct was such as to merit my highest encomiums. I beg leave to recommend the officers particularly to the notice of the Government, and also the unfortunate seamen who were wounded and the families of those who fell in the action." A few days later, on the appearance of a strange ship, all hands were called to quarters in the expectation of a battle, and Lieutenant Alwyn, although desperately wounded in the action with the *Java*, left his bed and repaired to his station. The ship, however, turned out to be the *Hornet*. He died at sea from the effect of his injuries, January 28th. The officers of the *Constitution* in this action were: George Parker, first lieutenant; Beekman Verplank Hoffman, second lieutenant; John Templer Shubrick, third lieutenant; Charles W. Morgan, fourth lieutenant; John C. Alwyn, junior lieutenant; John Nichols, sailing-master; John Carleton, chaplain; John Contee and William H. Freeman, lieutenants of marines; Amos A. Evans, surgeon; John D. Armstrong and Donaldson Yeates, surgeon's mates; Robert C. Ludlow, purser; Thomas A. Beatty, Lewis German, William L. Gordon, Ambrose D. Fields, Frederick Baury, Joseph Cross, Alexander Belcher, William Taylor, Alexander Eskridge, James W. Delancy, James Greenlaw, William D. M'Carty, Z. W. Nixon, John A. Wish, Dulaney Forrest, George H. Leverett, Henry Ward, John C. Long, John H. Packett and Richard Winter, midshipmen. Peter Adams was

boatswain, Ezekiel Darling gunner and John C. Cummings acting midshipman.

Believing it to be advisable to postpone the cruise in the East Indies, as the *Essex* failed to appear, Captain Bainbridge, after landing his prisoners at Bahia, sailed for the United States on the 6th of January, 1813, and on the 27th of February he arrived in Boston. Congress voted fifty thousand dollars to the officers and crew of the *Constitution* as prize money, and a gold medal to Captain Bainbridge and a silver one to each of his officers. The fifty thousand dollars was divided into twenty equal parts, as follows: Three parts to the captain; two parts to the sea lieutenants and sailing-master; two parts to the marine officers, surgeon, purser, boatswain, gunner, carpenter, master's mates and chaplain; three parts to the midshipmen, surgeon's mates, captain's clerks, schoolmaster, boatswain's mates, gunner's mates, carpenter's mates, steward, sailmaker, master-at-arms, armorer and coxswains; three parts among the gunner's yeomen, boatswain's yoemen, quartermasters, quarter gunners, coopers, sailmaker's mates, sergeants and corporals of the marines, drummer, fifer and extra petty officers; seven parts among the seamen, ordinary seamen, marines and boys.

The following account of Captain Bainbridge's reception in Boston after his victory over the *Java* is taken from a paper of that day: "On the Thursday following his arrival Captain Bainbridge landed at Long Wharf amid loud acclamations and roaring of cannon from the shore. All the way from the end of the pier to the Exchange Coffee House was decorated with colors and streamers. A procession was formed in Faneuil Hall by Major Tilden and was escorted by the Boston Light Infantry and the Winslow Blues. Decorations and streamers were strung across State Street, while the windows and the tops of the houses were filled with spectators. Captain Bainbridge was

distinguished by his noble figure and by his walking uncovered. On his right hand was the veteran Captain Rodgers, and on his left Brigadier-General Welles; then followed the brave Captain Hull, Colonel Blake and a number of officers and citizens. But the crowd was so immense that it was difficult to keep the order of the procession. The band of music in the balcony of the State Bank and the music of the New England Guards had a fine effect. On the 2d of March a splendid public dinner was given in the Exchange Coffee House to Captain Bainbridge and his officers. The procession was formed at Faneuil Hall and was escorted amid the applause of the citizens by a battalion composed of the Boston Light Infantry and the Winslow Blues, commanded by Colonel Sargeant. Before sitting down to the table the blessing of Almighty God was asked in a most impressive manner by the Rev. Mr. Holley." The crew of the *Constitution* was treated to a theatrical entertainment on the 9th of April. The City Council of Charleston, South Carolina, appointed March 8th as a day of rejoicing in honor of American naval victories, and the day was ushered in with the ringing of bells and firing of cannon. All business was suspended, and the day was given up to processions, banquets and oratory.

On arriving in Boston the *Constitution* was found to be in need of extensive repairs, but by the time these were completed the port was blockaded by a powerful British squadron, so it was not until the winter of 1814–'15 that *Old Ironsides* again got to sea. The colors of the *Java* are preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis. The surviving officers and crew of the *Java* were embarked in two cartels that sailed from Brazil for England shortly after the *Constitution* returned to the United States, and on being tried by court-martial for the loss of the *Java*, April 23, 1813, they were "most honorably acquitted."

Chads, after this battle, and possibly before it, always had a high opinion of the American seaman. In later years, when he was Sir Henry, he was wont to declare that of all the many brave men he had met in the course of a career which for thirty years had been a series of hard fights, dangerous expeditions and exciting events, the bravest was an American sailor named Reed. Reed was a gunner in the *Constitution* in her action with the *Java*. Some years afterward he turned up in the East Indies, where Chads commanded the British frigate *Andromache*, and enlisted in that ship. Chads selected Reed as chief gunner in a boat expedition against the Malay pirates; and in the succession of hand-to-hand fights Reed conducted himself with extraordinary coolness and bravery, saving a midshipman's life on one occasion by warding off a kriss-thrust, and at another time drowning a Malay in a struggle in the water. Reed's name was constantly slated for special mention, and after one of the fierce encounters with the pirates his shipmates made up a purse for him.

It will be interesting at this late day to see what effect the news of these three frigate actions had in England. The report of the capture of their first ship, the *Guerrière*, was taken with philosophical surprise: "The loss of a single frigate by us, when we consider how all other nations of the world have been dealt by, it is true is but a small one; when viewed as a portion of the British navy, it is almost nothing; yet, under all the circumstances of the two countries to which the vessels belonged, we know not any calamity of twenty times its amount that might have been attended with more serious consequences to the worsted party, had it not been counterbalanced by a contemporaneous advantage [alluding to Wellington's successes in Spain] of much greater magnitude. As it was, the loss of the *Guerrière* spread a degree of gloom through the town which it was painful to observe, but which was yet

most honorable to the patriotism of those over whom it was diffused."[1]

The news of the loss of the *Macedonian* was at first discredited. "There is a report that another English frigate, the *Macedonian*, has been captured by an American. We shall certainly be very backward in believing a second recurrence of such a national disgrace. . . . We have heard that the statement is discredited at the Admiralty, but we know not on what precise grounds. Certainly there was a time when it would not have been believed that the American navy could have appeared upon the seas after a six months' war with England; much less that it could, within that period, have been twice victorious. *Sed tempora mutantur.*"[2] The uncomfortable suspicion evidently grew, and on the next day the acute pang of confirmation extorted from the British lion the following: "O miserable advocates! Why, this renders the charge of mismanagement far heavier than before! In the name of God, what was done with this immense superiority of force? Why was not a squadron of observation off every port which contained an American ship of war? Why was not Rodgers intercepted with his whole squadron, and taken or destroyed within sight of his own coasts?"[3] On the following day their rage subsides into this lament: "Oh, what a charm is hereby dissolved! What hopes will be excited in the breasts of our enemies! The land spell of the French is broken [alluding to Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow] and so is our sea spell."[4] The London Morning Chronicle for December 26, 1812, with greater moderation, asks: "Is it not sickening to see that no experience has been sufficient to rouse our Admiralty to take measures that may protect the British flag from such disgrace?"

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[1] London Times, October 7, 1812.
[2] Ibid., December 26, 1812.
[3] Ibid., December 28, 1812.
[4] Ibid., December 29, 1812.

The news of the loss of the *Java* arriving in England, March 19, 1813, drew from the London Times the following resigned soliloquy: "The public will learn with sentiments which we shall not presume to anticipate that a third British frigate has struck to an American. . . . This is an occurrence that calls for serious reflection—this, and the fact stated in our paper of yesterday, that Lloyd's list contains notices of upward of five hundred British vessels captured in seven months by the Americans. Five hundred merchantmen and three frigates! Can these statements be true? And can the English people hear them unmoved? Any one who had predicted such a result of an American war this time last year would have been treated as a madman or a traitor. He would have been told, if his opponents had condescended to argue with him, that long ere seven months had elapsed the American flag would have been swept from the seas, the contemptible navy of the United States annihilated, and their marine arsenals rendered a heap of ruins. Yet down to this moment not a single American frigate has struck her flag."[1]

NOTE.—John Collings Long, who served with credit in this battle, afterward became a commodore in the navy. As commander of the *Mississippi* he was ordered to bring Kossuth to this country; and as the American commander would not allow Kossuth to deliver revolutionary speeches while the *Mississippi* was at Marseilles, the Hungarian left the ship at Gibraltar. Commodore Long's last duty was the command of the Pacific squadron. He died in 1865.

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[1] London Times, March 20, 1813.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST SLOOP ACTIONS.

In the three preceding chapters the triumph of the much-ridiculed American 44-gun frigates, and the success of many innovations in their construction, armaments and general equipments introduced by American shipwrights and naval officers have been noted. But at the outbreak of hostilities with England the United States sloops of war did not have a marked difference in their construction and arrangements except in such details as the superior American genius would suggest. They had been built more in accordance with the same class of war ships in the British navy at that time. The *Wasp*, *Hornet*, *Argus*, *Vixen* and *Viper* had little to distinguish them from English craft of the same rates. After their service in the Mediterranean the *Wasp* and the *Hornet* were altered so as to carry three masts instead of two, and were ship-rigged. As the actions in which these vessels were engaged deprive our friends, the English, of the charge of superiority of force, it will be interesting to notice the results of their combats with British sloops of war, and to see if the greater equality in the opposing forces led to a proportionate equality of damage and losses.

In the last chapter we left the *Hornet* blockading the *Bonne Citoyenne*, Captain Greene, in the port of Bahia, while the *Constitution*, after capturing the *Java*, returned to the United States. With a dogged determination to fight the *Bonne Citoyenne* at any risk, Master-Commandant Lawrence remained off the port of Bahia until the 24th of January, 1813. Captain

Greene, who had said: "I am convinced, sir, that if such a rencounter were to take place the result would not be long dubious, and would terminate favorably to the ship which I have the honor to command," now sent a



Cruises of the Hornet and the Wasp.

note by a Portuguese fishing-smack to Rio Janeiro, requesting the commander of the English 74-gun ship of the line *Montagu* to release him from his humiliating position. So disgusted had Master-Commandant Lawrence become at what he considered the cowardice of Captain Greene, that he undoubtedly would have maintained the blockade indefinitely had he not been driven off by the *Montagu*, which ship came up from Rio Janeiro for the "express purpose"[1] of liberating the

[1] Washington Irving, Spanish Papers, vol. ii, p. 42.

Bonne Citoyenne. So unexpected was her arrival that the *Hornet* was compelled to run into the harbor to avoid capture, so that she in turn was in danger of being blockaded; but on the following night Master-Commandant Lawrence boldly stood out of the harbor and got to sea in spite of the *Montagu*. By this time several British men-of-war were making for Bahia to intercept the *Hornet*, and Master-Commandant Lawrence determined to change his cruising ground, and hauling by the wind to the eastward he made sail for Pernambuco. On the 14th of February he captured the British merchant ship *Resolution*, mounting ten guns and laden with coffee and tea; she also had on board about twenty-three thousand dollars in specie. Having transferred his prisoners and burned his prize, Master-Commandant Lawrence shaped his course for Maranham, where he cruised several days, and then made for Surinam, cruising off that port from the 15th to the 22d of February. Afterward he stood over to Demerara for the purpose of running along the West Indies on his way to the United States.

On the morning of the 24th of February a brig was discovered off the lee bow. Chase was immediately given, but having run into a quarter less five fathoms, and having no pilot aboard, Master-Commandant Lawrence was obliged to haul off. Before he gave up the pursuit, however, another brig had been discovered lying at anchor within the bar. This was the English sloop of war *Espiègle*, Captain John Taylor, mounting sixteen short 32-pounders and two long guns. The American commander determined to attack her at her anchorage, and was beating around the Carobana Banks for that purpose, when, at 3.30 P. M., a third sail was descried to windward. By 4 P. M. she was made out to be a large brig of war, and twenty minutes later she hoisted British colors. Upon this Master-Commandant Lawrence cleared for action and sent his men to their stations. His first lieutenant, Walter Stewart, was ill

and unable to leave his berth, so that Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick acted in his place. At 5.10 P. M. the *Hornet*, by keeping close to the wind, succeeded in weathering the stranger. The American flag was now thrown to the breeze, and fifteen minutes later, or at 5.25 P. M., the vessels passed each other on opposite tacks and exchanged broadsides at half pistol-shot. After this the Englishman luffed so as to continue the action on the other tack, but the *Hornet* quickly bore up, and, having received the enemy's starboard fire, ran close aboard the starboard quarter and tenaciously held that position to the end of the battle. A destructive fire was then poured into the British vessel. The American guns were fired so rapidly that in order to keep them cool buckets of water were constantly dashed over them.

At 5.36 P. M., or eleven minutes from the beginning of the action, the English vessel surrendered, and immediately afterward hoisted her flag from her fore rigging with the union down, as a signal of distress. In his official report Master-Commandant Lawrence is recorded as saying that the British vessel surrendered at 5.40 P. M., making the duration of the action fifteen minutes. This was a mistake, "but," said Lawrence, "as my clerk got it down 'fifteen,' I thought that was short enough." The Americans then ceased firing, while Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick was sent aboard to take possession. Shortly afterward the enemy's mainmast went by the board. Mr. Shubrick returned with the first lieutenant of the English sloop of war *Peacock*, her commander, Captain William Peake, having been killed in the action. The prize, with six

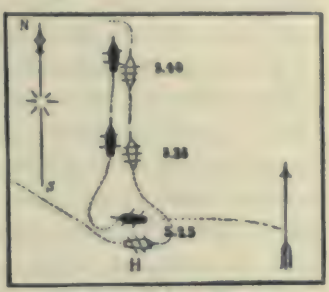


Diagram of the battle.

feet of water in her hold, was fast sinking, and Master-Commandant Lawrence hastily got out all his boats under the command of Acting-Lieutenant David Conner and Midshipman Benjamin Cooper to rescue the survivors. Before the short twilight merged into darkness the *Peacock* was anchored, the shot holes that could be reached were plugged, the guns thrown overboard, the pumps manned and every effort made to keep her afloat, but a few minutes after her surrender she sank in five and a half fathoms, carrying down thirteen of her own crew and three of the *Hornet's*, the names of the latter being John Hart, Joseph Williams and Hannibal Boyd. Four of the thirteen Englishmen, however, managed to climb into the foretop, where they were rescued. Lieutenant Conner, Midshipman Cooper and several of the *Hornet's* men, who were engaged in removing the wounded and prisoners, jumped into the launch lying at the *Peacock's* booms and were saved. Before the vessel sank four of her men, availing themselves of the confusion of the moment, seized the boat towing astern, and, notwithstanding its shattered condition, reached the shore. The *Peacock* had three American seamen aboard, who, on seeing the United States flag, went aft and requested to be excused from fighting, but Captain Peake ordered them back and instructed the marines to be particularly watchful of them, and to shoot them down at the first sign of flinching. One of these men was killed. Another was a relative of Master-Commandant Lawrence's wife.

The *Hornet* was four feet longer than the *Peacock*, but had five inches less beam. The former mounted eighteen short 32-pounders and two long 12-pounders, making in all twenty guns or two hundred and seventy-nine pounds, allowing for deficient weight, of metal to the broadside. Out of her original complement of one hundred and fifty the sailing-master and seven men were absent in a prize, leaving the *Hornet* at the time of

this action with one hundred and forty-two men. The *Peacock* mounted sixteen short 24-pounders, two long 9-pounders, one short 12-pounder and one long 6-pounder, making a total of twenty guns with two hundred and ten pounds of metal to a broadside, only sixty-nine pounds less than the *Hornet*. Her quarter bill showed a crew of one hundred and thirty-four men, of whom four were away in a prize. "The *Peacock* had long been the admiration of her numerous visitors for the tasteful arrangement of her deck, and had obtained, in consequence, the name of the yacht. The breechings of the carronades were lined with white canvas, the shot lockers shifted from their usual places, and nothing could exceed in brilliancy the polish upon the traversing bars and elevating screws."[1] The *Hornet* sustained little or no damage in her hull, her injuries being confined chiefly to the rigging. One shot passed through the foremast, and she received a slight wound in the bowsprit.[2] Her loss was one man killed, John Place, who was shot while in the tops, and four men wounded, two of the latter by an explosion of a cartridge. The Americans lost more men in attempting to save the drowning Englishmen than by the enemy's fire. The *Peacock*, as we have seen, was utterly demolished, and in a few minutes, from being a beautiful "yacht" she was a sunken wreck. A Halifax paper of the day said that "a vessel moored for the purpose of experiment could not have been sunk sooner. It will not do for our vessels to fight theirs single-handed. The Americans are a dead nip." The *Peacock's* loss was Captain Peake and four seamen killed; one sailing-master, one midshipman and thirty-one seamen wounded. Among the English prisoners was a boy whose father had been killed in the battle, and out of compassion Master-Commandant Lawrence

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 48.

[2] Official report of Master-Commandant Lawrence.

took the youth under his special protection. Writing home from Bermuda in 1813, Sir Charles Napier gives one of the many evidences that about this time British contempt for American naval prowess was rapidly turning into respect, if not fear: "Two packets are quite due, and we fear that they have been taken, for the Yankees swarm here, and when a frigate goes out to drive them off by force they take her! Yankees fight well, and are gentlemen in their mode of warfare. Decatur refused Carden's sword, saying, 'Sir, you have used it so well I should be ashamed to take it from you.' These Yankees, though so much abused, are really fine fellows."

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Hornet:	20	279	142	1	4	5	Time
Peacock:	20	210	130	5	33	38	11m.

Master-Commandant Lawrence made every exertion to get his ship in fighting trim, for in the bay, not more than six miles distant, in plain sight, lay the *Espiègle*, a brig of even greater force than the *Peacock*. During the action Captain Taylor remained quietly at anchor, although he could see the vessels engaged and must have heard the heavy cannonading. Subsequently he was tried by a court-martial and was found guilty of having "neglected to exercise the ship's company at the great guns." By nine o'clock that night the *Hornet* had her boats stowed away and a new set of sails bent, and was in every other respect prepared to meet the *Espiègle*, but Captain Taylor allowed the American sloop of war to depart unmolested.

Nothing could exceed the care that Master-Commandant Lawrence took of his wounded prisoners. Every exertion was made to have their necessarily cramped quarters as comfortable as possible, and such was their appreciation of this generous treatment that on arrival in the United States the British officers pub-

lished a letter of gratitude. They said, "We can not better express our feelings than by saying we cease to consider ourselves prisoners." The magnanimity of Master-Commandant Lawrence was contagious. The sailors of the *Hornet*, knowing that the *Peacock's* men had lost everything by the sinking of their ship, made contributions from their own scanty kits and supplied each of the Englishmen with a complete outfit. In his official report of this action Master-Commandant Lawrence spoke in the highest terms of the gallantry of Lieutenants Shubrick, Conner and Newton.

This action again illustrates the superiority of American gunnery. An English author writes: "The firing of the *Hornet* was admirable, and proved that her men, to the credit of Lawrence and his officers, had been well taught what use to make of their guns." On the other hand, speaking of the sentence of the court-martial convened to try Captain Taylor of the *Espiègle*, the same writer says: "It seemed hard, however, to punish the *Espiègle's* commander for a piece of neglect [i. e., to exercise the men at their guns] which prevailed over two thirds of the British navy."

At 2 A. M. on the 25th of February the *Hornet* weighed anchor and under easy canvas stood out to sea. Running through the West Indies and past the Capes of Virginia she arrived at Holmes' Hole, Martha's Vineyard, on the 19th of March; thence proceeding to New York by Hell Gate, she completed a cruise of one hundred and forty-five days. On the 4th of May the Common Council of the city of New York gave a public dinner in Washington Hall to the officers and crew of the *Hornet*. A periodical of the day says: "In the evening the gallant tars were treated to a seat in the pit of the theater by the managers and roused the house by their jollity and applause during the performance. Captain Lawrence, with General Van Rensselaer, General Morton and a number of other officials, filled one of the side boxes and made the house ring

with huzzas on their appearance." In the following June the *Hornet*, with the *United States* and the *Macedonian*, attempted to get to sea, but they were driven back and blockaded in New London by a superior force. Early in 1815 the *Hornet* managed to run the blockade and get to sea. The colors of the *Peacock* are preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

As we have seen in Chapter IV, Captain John Rodgers, having refitted after his first cruise, sailed again on the 8th of October, 1812, in the 44-gun frigate *President*, having with him the 44-gun frigate *United States*, Captain Stephen Decatur; the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, Captain John Smith; and the 16-gun brig *Argus*, Master-Commandant Arthur Sinclair. On the 12th of October the *President* and the *Congress* separated from the other vessels and continued their cruise in company. Taking a northerly course, Captain Rodgers, on the 17th of October, while on the Newfoundland Banks, fell in with the Jamaica homeward-bound packet *Swallow*. When she was taken, two hundred thousand dollars in gold and silver, packed in twenty boxes, were found in her hold. Shaping their course eastward, the frigates, on the morning of the 31st of October, while in latitude 32° North, longitude 30° West, discovered three sails. These were the British 36-gun frigate *Galatea*, sister ship of the *Belvidera*, Captain Woodley Losack, and the South Sea whalers *Berkeley* and *Argo*. The *Galatea* bore down to reconnoiter, and at 10 A. M., discovering the *President* and the *Congress* to be American frigates, and having learned three days before from the outward-bound India merchant ship *Inglis* that war had been declared, Captain Losack stood away to the east. At noon the *Galatea* was on her best point of sailing, with the American frigates about four miles astern. The *Congress* at this time stood after the *Argo* and captured her, while the *President* continued in chase of the *Galatea*. The pursuit

was maintained throughout the afternoon, but, although the *President* gained, it was dark before she came within gunshot, and seeing that the chase would escape in the night Captain Rodgers hauled off and rejoined his consort. From this time until the 30th of November the two frigates did not meet a sail. Having gone as far as 22° West and 17° North, they ran over to Bermuda, and thence past the Capes of Virginia to Boston, at which port they arrived on the 31st of December.

After parting from the *President* and the *Congress*, the *United States* and the *Argus* also took up different courses, Captain Decatur soon afterward falling in with the British 38-gun frigate *Macedonian* off the Canary Islands, as has been narrated in Chapter IV. After leaving the *United States* the *Argus* headed southward, and in two weeks arrived off the coast of Brazil, taking one or two valuable prizes on the way. Cruising for several days between St. Roque and Surinam, Master-Commandant Sinclair passed to the windward of the West Indies and then steered north. Arriving off Bermuda, he hovered in the vicinity of that port until driven off by a superior force. Two weeks later the little brig appeared off Halifax and succeeded in intercepting a number of vessels bound for British America. While off Nova Scotia the *Argus* experienced intensely cold weather. It was impossible to handle the ropes without freezing the fingers, and the spray froze on the sails, making them as brittle as glass, and when loosed they would not fall from the yards. It frequently became necessary to strike them with hammers and capstan bars, and when this was done the ice broke and fell to the deck in showers. The ropes were incrusted with ice and would neither start nor run through the sheaves. In such a condition, it was impossible to tack, and when it became necessary for the brig to wear this was done by first hauling up the foresail, as no dependence could be placed on the tacks or

the sheets working in their blocks. The clouds of spray that dashed over the vessel froze on the guns, rigging and decks as fast as it fell, so that the ship from one end to the other was one mass of ice, rendering walking exceedingly dangerous, and in rough weather, when the sloop was rolling and pitching, impossible. Having secured five prizes, valued at two hundred thousand dollars, Master-Commandant Sinclair made for the United States, and arrived in Boston on the 3d of January, 1813, three days after Captain Rodgers gained that port. In this cruise of eighty-seven days the *Argus* was chased by a British squadron, two vessels of which were ships of the line. The favor of the moon enabled them to keep the brig in sight at night as well as in the day, so that for seventy hours her position was critical ; but by superior seamanship Master-Commandant Sinclair escaped with all his guns, although he was compelled to sacrifice his anchors and boats.

The 36-gun frigate *Constellation*, famous during the French war, was being prepared for sea under the direction of Captain Charles Stewart, but when she got down to Hampton Roads, January, 1813, it was found that a strong blockading force had been stationed off the bay. The *Constellation* was then anchored at Norfolk, and remained there throughout the war. The English made several attempts to destroy her, but Captain Stewart arranged such a perfect line of defense that they were repelled every time. On the return of the 44-gun frigate *Constitution* from her cruise in which she captured the *Java*, Captain Stewart was transferred to the command of "*Old Ironsides*," while Captain Joseph Tarbell was placed in command of the *Constellation*.

In the earlier part of the War of 1812 the United States 12-gun brig *Vixen*, Master-Commandant Christopher Gadsden, was employed on the Southern coast. On the death of her commander she was placed under

the orders of Lieutenant George Washington Read, who had been first lieutenant under Captain Somers before Tripoli. On the 22d of November, 1812, while cruising among the West Indies, the *Vixen* was chased by the British 32-gun frigate *Southampton*, Captain Sir James Lucas Yeo, which succeeded in getting alongside of the brig and compelled her to surrender. Both vessels were lost soon afterward on Concepcion Island, one of the Bahama group. Before he could be exchanged Master-Commandant Read died from yellow fever. On the 17th of January, 1813, the United States 10-gun sloop *Viper*, Lieutenant John D. Henley, was overtaken and captured by the British 32-gun frigate *Narcissus*.

On the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Great Britain the American 18-gun sloop of war *Wasp* was in European waters conveying dispatches for the Government. Returning to the United States, she immediately refitted and sailed from the Delaware on the 13th of October, under the command of Master-Commandant Jacob Jones, who had seen active service in the Mediterranean, and who was in the *Philadelphia* when that frigate ran on the shoals before Tripoli and was captured. It was Master-Commandant Jones' intention to get into the track of the enemy's merchantmen plying between the West Indies and England. While running due east for this purpose the *Wasp* was overtaken by a violent gale, in which she lost her jib boom and two men who were on it. About half past eleven o'clock on the night of the 17th several lights were discovered, which were made out to be a small convoy of merchant ships. Thinking it imprudent to remain too near the strangers while in a damaged condition, there being a clear moonlight, Master-Commandant Jones drew to windward until the morning light should discover to him the force of the escort. In the morning it was seen that five merchantmen were being convoyed by a brig of war, and that

several of the merchant ships also mounted from sixteen to eighteen guns.[1]

The *Wasp* was now in latitude 37° North, longitude 65° West, or a little eastward of Albemarle Sound. As she bore down on the strangers the brig of war signaled her convoy to make all sail before the wind while she dropped astern to reconnoiter. Hoisting his colors and pennant, about eleven o'clock in the morning, Master-Commandant Jones made for the stranger, and at 11.32 A. M., when the vessels were fifty or sixty yards apart, he hailed and demanded the stranger's name. By way of an answer the brig hauled down the Spanish flag and ran up British colors, and poured in a broadside and a volley of musketry. The *Wasp* responded promptly, and as the vessels gradually neared each other the firing became close and destructive. A few minutes after the battle opened the *Wasp* lost her main topmast, and as it fell, together with the main topsail yard, across the port fore and foretopsail braces, the head yards were useless for the rest of the action. Three minutes after this mishap the gaff and the mizzen topgallant mast were shot away, which left the *Wasp* almost unmanageable. At the same time the enemy had sustained no considerable injury that was visible from the deck of the American ship, yet the *Wasp's* fire had been exceedingly rapid, and it was thought accurate. A heavy sea was running, which frequently submerged the muzzles of the guns. At 11.52 A. M., twenty minutes from the time the action began, the vessels were within half pistol-shot. By this time the *Wasp's* rig-

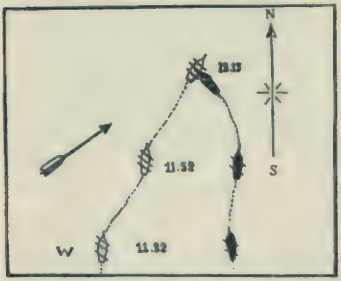


Diagram of the battle.

[1] Official report of Master-Commandant Jones.

ging and masts were badly cut up. Besides the loss of her jib boom in the gale of the 15th and the damage already mentioned, every brace and most of the other running rigging were cut away, whereas the enemy had lost only her gaff and head braces. But this loss proved most unfortunate; for, as the brig was unable to trim her head yards, her after sails threw her into a position to be raked by the *Wasp*. Master-Commandant Jones quickly availed himself of this by running the enemy's bowsprit between his main and mizzen masts, just over the heads of Master-Commandant Jones and Lieutenant Biddle, who were standing near the capstan. The Americans then loaded with grape and canister and swept the enemy's deck with great effect. So close were the vessels that the American ramrods were pushed against the side of the British ship.

Lieutenant James Biddle with his boarders now sprang upon the hammock cloths in readiness to jump aboard the brig as soon as a roll of the vessels should bring them close enough. Master-Commandant Jones, in view of the dangerous condition of his spars and rigging, was unwilling to relinquish his present advantage, and ordered his crew to their guns; but the ardor of the men could not be restrained, and before his command could reach them an American sailor, Jack Lang, who had been impressed in the British service, jumped upon his gun, and, reaching up to the brig's bowsprit, clambered along that spar and gained the enemy's deck. Seeing the impetuosity of the crew, Lieutenant Biddle, followed by Lieutenant George W. Rodgers and Midshipman Yorick Baker and his boarders, taking advantage of a favorable lurch, sprang upon the brig's forecastle. The scene they beheld there beggars description. Only a few of the English ship's company were standing, one a lieutenant, who was bleeding from numerous wounds and leaning against the companion way for support, another a quartermaster who remained at the wheel still clutching it with a grim de-

termination to die at his post, apparently regardless of the slaughter around him. The decks were thickly strewn with the mutilated dead and dying, and as the vessel rolled, great quantities of blood diluted with water washed from one side to the other, covering the prostrate forms and splashing the bulwarks and masts with a ghastly hue. The horrid spectacle chilled all feelings of exultation in the breasts of the victorious Americans and aroused their sympathy. Carefully picking their way over the dead and wounded, they reached the quarter-deck, when the surviving officer dropped his sword in token of submission, while Lieutenant Biddle hauled down the colors. A few minutes later the enemy's masts fell, the mainmast going close to the deck, and the foremast leaving a stump twelve or fifteen feet high.

The prize was the British brig of war *Frolic*, Captain Thomas Whinyates, convoying merchantmen homeward bound from Honduras, and carrying a crew of one hundred and ten all told.[1] Captain Whinyates reports: "At length the enemy boarded and made himself master of the brig, every individual officer being killed or wounded, and the greater part of the men either killed or wounded, there being not twenty persons remaining unhurt." James, however, places her loss at fifteen killed and forty-seven wounded, among the latter being Captain Whinyates and Second-Lieutenant Frederick Boughton Wintle, while Lieutenant Charles M'Kay was mortally injured. Out of her crew of one hundred and thirty-eight the *Wasp* lost five killed and five wounded.[2] When Master-Commandant Jones learned of the frightful slaughter in the *Frolic* he immediately sent the *Wasp's* surgeon's mate aboard. It was now seen why the American shot apparently did no damage to the *Frolic*. The gunners of the English

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. v, p. 391.

[2] Official report of Master-Commandant Jones.



Action between the Wasp and the Frolic.

brig fired on the upward roll, which accounts for most of their shot taking effect in the *Wasp's* spars and rigging. The American gunners, on the contrary, fired on the downward roll, their shot striking the enemy's hull.

The duration of this action, from the first broadside to the time Lieutenant Biddle lowered the British flag, was forty-three minutes. The two vessels were of the same size. The *Frolic*, during a gale, had lost her main yard, and had had her topsails blown away and her main topmast sprung. The *Wasp*, during the same gale, was also much damaged in her rigging and spars. The latter's armament consisted of sixteen short 32-pounders and two long 12-pounders, with an actual weight of two hundred and forty-nine pounds of metal to the broadside. James gives the *Frolic* sixteen short 32-pounders, two long 6-pounders and two short 12-pounders, or twenty guns, with two hundred and seventy-four pounds of metal to the broadside. But he has not given any authority for this statement. Captain Whinyates, in his official report of the action to Admiral Warren, as given to the public, is silent as to the size, crew or force of either the *Wasp* or the *Frolic*. Master-Commandant Jones, in his report, gives a minute description of the *Wasp's* and *Frolic's* armaments, placing the latter's at twenty-two guns, sixteen of them 32-pound carronades and four 12-pounders on the main deck and two 12-pound carronades on the topgallant forecastle. James seems to have depended entirely on Master-Commandant Jones' report of this battle. In no particular does he use the few statistics given by Captain Whinyates, while his description and discussion of the action are full of American figures. Under these circumstances we are justified in accepting the statement given by Master-Commandant Jones in reference to the *Frolic's* armament, rather than James'. This gives the *Frolic* twenty-two guns, with two hundred and ninety-two pounds of metal to the broadside.

We have now discussed two actions in which the opposing vessels were of the same force (even English authorities admitting that the *Frolic* had a superior armament to the *Wasp*), and yet the proportion of damage and loss is even more against the British vessels than they were in the frigate's actions.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Wasp:	18	249	138	5	5	10	Time
Frolic:	22	292	110	15	47	62	43m.

The *Frolic* was literally cut to pieces. Almost every broadside crashed into her hull with terrible precision, while her masts were so damaged that shortly after the surrender they fell, covering the decks with the wreckage. It is doubtful if there is another instance in naval history where such a large proportion of a crew fell by cannon fire alone, and this is the more remarkable when we consider that a heavy sea was running, which in such small craft made accurate cannon fire extremely difficult. That the Admiralty did not find extenuating circumstances in the capture of the British cruiser *Frolic* by an American vessel of inferior force is shown in these significant words: "Since then [i. e., his return to England after this action] we find no official mention of him [Captain Whinyates]."[1] In the afternoon, while the Americans were repairing damages, a sail hove in sight, which proved to be the British 74-gun ship of the line *Poictiers*, Captain Sir John P. Beresford, and running down on the two sloops of war she seized both the *Wasp* and her prize, and carried them to Bermuda.

Master-Commandant Jones in his official report spoke in the highest terms of the conduct of Lieutenants Biddle and George W. Rodgers, Midshipmen Benjamin W. Booth and Henry B. Rapp and Sailing-

[1] Marshall's Royal Naval Biography, vol. xi, p. 108.

Master William Knight. Midshipman Alexander Claxton, who was on the sick list when the enemy was sighted, left his berth and remained on deck during the entire engagement, although too ill to be with his division. The other officers in the *Wasp* were Thomas Harris, surgeon; Walter W. New, surgeon's mate; George S. Wise, purser; George W. Vancleave, A. S. Ten Eyck, Richard Brashiers, John Holcomb, William J. M'Cluney, C. J. Baker and Charles Gauntt, midshipmen; John M'Cland, boatswain; and George Jackson, gunner. Congress voted twenty-five thousand dollars to the officers and seamen of the *Wasp* as prize money, and a gold medal to Master-Commandant Jones and a silver one to each of his officers, while the Legislature of Pennsylvania gave a sword to Lieutenant Biddle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHESAPEAKE AND THE SHANNON.

LANDING in New York after his brilliant victory over the *Peacock*, Captain Lawrence was received with great enthusiasm and well-merited applause. Previously to his return he had been promoted to the rank of captain, and the command of the 44-gun frigate *Constitution* was now offered to him, on the condition, however, that neither Captain David Porter nor Captain Samuel Evans applied for it. This conditional offer, being distasteful to Captain Lawrence, was declined, whereupon the Secretary of the Navy gave him unconditionally the command of that favorite ship. But a few weeks later Captain Lawrence was surprised and chagrined by counter orders, with instructions to repair immediately to Boston and take command of the 36-gun frigate *Chesapeake*, then nearly ready for sea. From the time of her ignominious surrender to the *Leopard*, in 1807, the *Chesapeake* had been stigmatized as an unlucky ship, and this reputation had been strangely borne out in her subsequent career. On the 17th of December, 1812, this frigate, under the command of Captain Samuel Evans, sailed from Boston for an extended cruise against the enemy. Running down to Madeira and past the Cape Verdes, she reached the equator without taking any considerable prize. Here Captain Evans cruised six weeks between longitudes 16° and 25° West without sighting an enemy, and then, hoping for better luck, he made for the coast of South America. Approaching within forty-five miles of Surinam, he passed the spot where the *Hornet*, only the

day before, had sunk the *Peacock*. Thus early did the *Chesapeake* cast her baleful shadow over the young life of Lawrence.

Cruising among the West Indies with the same want of success, Captain Evans headed north, and passing near Bermuda and the Capes of Virginia he arrived at Boston on the 18th of April. During this protracted cruise of one hundred and twenty-two days the *Chesapeake* had taken only five merchantmen, recaptured one American vessel, chased an English frigate, and was in turn pursued by a ship of the line. While entering Boston harbor on her return she had the misfortune to lose a topmast, and the men on it were drowned. The accident, happening just on her return to port, was regarded among the seafaring men as an inauspicious omen for the next cruise, and this, together with her previous reputation for bad luck and a sailor's unaffected dread of such a ship, made it exceedingly difficult to enlist another crew. In the estimation of all thorough seamen such bad records were of the greatest importance. The repute of the vessel exercised a powerful influence not only in enlisting a crew but on its efficiency. The *Constitution*, the *Constellation* and the *Enterprise* were the lucky vessels of the service, while the *Chesapeake* and the *President* were the unlucky ones. These vessels went into the War of 1812 with such characters, and they were strangely borne out by the naval operations of 1812–'15. Besides this unfortunate reputation, the *Chesapeake* was deservingly styled by Washington Irving "the worst frigate of our navy," and immediately on her return to Boston from her last cruise the men made haste to leave her, while her officers found employment in other vessels. Captain Evans, having lost the sight of one eye and being in imminent danger of losing that of the other, was permitted to remain on shore while undergoing medical treatment. Such being the condition of the *Chesapeake* after her last unsuc-

cessful cruise, it is not surprising that Captain Lawrence felt "extreme reluctance" in obeying his orders. He even requested to be continued in command of the little *Hornet* rather than accept promotion to such a frigate. He wrote "four letters successively to the Secretary of the Navy,"[1] asking for some alteration in his last instructions, but receiving no answer he was constrained to obey.

It was the intention of the Navy Department to have the *Hornet*, Master-Commandant James Biddle, then refitting in New York, sail in company with the *Chesapeake* on a cruise to the north, with the twofold object of intercepting British vessels bound for the St. Lawrence and of destroying the Greenland whale fisheries. In furtherance of this plan Captain Lawrence, a few days before sailing, sent the following letter to Master-Commandant Biddle, in which he clearly expressed the reluctance with which he sailed in the *Chesapeake:*

"Boston, *May 27, 1813.*

"Dear Sir: In hopes of being relieved by Captain Stewart I neglected writing agreeably to promise, but as I have given over all hopes of seeing him, and the *Chesapeake* is almost ready, I shall sail on Sunday [May 30th], provided I have a chance of getting out clear of the *Shannon* and the *Tenedos*, who are on the look-out. My intention is to pass out by Cape Sable and then run out west [east?], until I get into the stream, then haul in for Cape Canso, and run from Cape Breton, where I expect the pleasure of seeing you. I think your best chance for getting out is through the Sound. In haste, yours sincerely,

"James Lawrence."

In the earlier part of the War of 1812 the enemy did not make serious efforts to interfere with the trade of the New England States, under the impression that

[1] Washington Irving, Spanish Papers, vol. ii, p. 45.

they were opposed to the war and were friendly to Great Britain. But when a number of American war vessels put into Boston, after their successful cruises, and were received with every demonstration of joy, the English began to doubt if the New Englanders were so friendly after all, and in the spring of 1813 powerful blockading squadrons were collected off their ports. Among these vessels was the 38-gun frigate *Shannon*, Captain Philip Bowes Vere Broke. The condition of this frigate was sufficiently remarkable to merit a moment's notice. The *Shannon* was one of the most efficient ships of her class afloat. In this particular she formed a striking contrast to the average British war vessel of that day. This distinction was entirely due to the efforts of her commander, who, in spite of the regulations of the service and at considerable expense to himself, developed the *Shannon's* force and trained her men to the highest proficiency. Yonge, in his Naval History of Great Britain, says: "From the time that Captain Broke took command of her he had carefully trained her crew in gunnery and in every other exercise calculated to make them really efficient in the day of trial." Turning to various records, we find that Captain Broke assumed command of the *Shannon* on the 14th of September, 1806, so that down to 1813 he had commanded her over six years.

To those who have had practical experience in seamanship the advantage of a long acquaintance with a ship is obvious. Every vessel has its peculiarities, which require at least one voyage for her officers and men to discover them. By this time Captain Broke had thoroughly mastered the "tricks" of the *Shannon*, and by those innumerable little changes or additions in her rigging, armament etc., which only experience could suggest, he had developed her efficiency in speed and battle to the utmost limits. In other words, he had grown into his ship. Not only had Captain Broke been in continuous command of the *Shannon*

over six years, but his present crew had served under him five years. "The crew of the *Shannon* had been five years together, commanded by the same captain."[1] Thus it was that Captain Broke was thoroughly acquainted with his crew; he knew whom of his officers he could trust for any particular duty, and on whom to depend in the many emergencies of battle. The quartermasters were those best fitted for their places, the boatswain and mate by long training and a series of promotions had proved themselves in every way qualified to handle their respective watches; and they, in turn, knew just which of their men could be relied upon for the performance of any hazardous duty. Thus it was throughout the ship's entire company.

That the crew of the *Shannon* had been trained to the highest possible degree of skill and competency, and that Captain Broke was regarded as an unusually able disciplinarian for the British navy of that period, is admitted by James when he says: "Every day, for about an hour and a half in the forenoon, when not prevented by chase or the state of the weather, the men were exercised at training the guns, and for the same time in the afternoon in the use of the broadsword, pike, musket etc. Twice a week the crew fired at targets both with the great guns and musketry, and Captain Broke, as an additional stimulus beyond the emulation excited, gave a pound of tobacco to every man that put a shot through the bull's eye." Brighton, in his memoirs of Sir Philip B. V. Broke, says: "The guns were manned from the port and starboard watches alternately, the odd-numbered guns from the port watch, the even-numbered guns from the starboard watch; the idea was that the watch below should not be disturbed, and that those men who fought together ought to be exercised together. In exercising with shot at a mark each gun was allowed three shot. The mark

[1] Allen's Battles of the British Navy, vol. ii, p. 430.

was a beef cask with a square piece of canvas of about four feet. It was always cut to pieces, the distance being between three and four hundred yards. There was also an occasional exercise, which was, to lay the ship to, throw a beef cask overboard and at the same time pass the word, 'Numbers two and four, main-deck guns, up to your quarters!' Then the captain gave the word, 'Clear for action and fire at the cask!' It was in most instances sunk, but the shot always went close enough to be called effective." A writer in the United Service Journal of 1841 said: "It should not be forgotten that the present system of gunnery in the royal navy sprang from the *Shannon's*, borne on at last upon the tide of popular favor from the surprising effects it had produced in the capture of the *Chesapeake*." Such were the thorough state of preparation and developed force of the *Shannon* at this time that James says: "Had this frigate [the *Shannon*], in the excellent order she was kept, met the *Constitution* in August, 1812, we verily believe— But the *Shannon* and *Constitution* did not meet, therefore the thing was not tried." Here we have an admission on the part of James that the *Shannon* on this occasion had been so thoroughly prepared for battle as to be nearly or quite able to cope successfully with the *Constitution;* it being borne in mind that the *Constitution* was a heavier frigate than the *Chesapeake*, the former rating as a 44-gun and the latter as a 36-gun ship.

An example of the splendid discipline maintained in the *Shannon* was given on the night of April 5, 1813, when she was struck by lightning while lying to in the act of boarding a schooner that she had just captured. Her main topmast and topgallant mast were shivered to pieces, and fifteen feet out of the middle of the former was blown to atoms. The topsail yard was broken in the slings, a cheek and hasp were forced off the head of the mainmast and the mast was shaken to the quarter-deck, where the partners were broken. The

main yard also was sprung in two places; the brass skewers in the truck and some links of the maintop chain were melted as if they had been in a furnace. For some time after the crash the tops were on fire, and nothing but the perfect discipline of the crew saved the ship from destruction. Captain Broke was in his cabin and thought several guns had been fired. Rushing to the deck, he found his masts and rigging on fire. Ordering the drummer to beat to quarters, he soon had his crew under control and averted a serious disaster.

The result of the first five actions between American and English cruisers in the War of 1812 caused deep humiliation in England. "The British navy, depressed by repeated mortifications, had in some measure lost its spirits; and the dissatisfaction expressed in the public journals of the empire produced a feeling of discontent and disgust in the bosom of our seamen."[1] And well it might. During the preceding eighteen years the British navy had matched its strength against that of almost every civilized nation, and in two hundred actions between single ships the English were defeated but five times, and on each of those five occasions their vessel was of inferior force to her antagonist. But in six months this same navy had suffered five consecutive and overwhelming defeats, in one of which their vessel is acknowledged to have been superior in force to her antagonist, with not one corresponding success. And this, too, from "the contemptible navy of the United States,"[2] which had long been the butt of ridicule and the "unmanly taunts of too many English party writers."[3] To stem this torrent of popular rage and to soothe the wounded pride of Britons at home, English commanders on the American station found it necessary to report some success

[1] Brenton's History of the British Navy, vol. ii, p. 490.
[2] London Times, March 20, 1813.
[3] Edinburgh Review, April, 1840, p. 125.

more substantial than a furious chase or a masterly retreat.

Conscious of the superior condition of his ship, and confident of his ability to capture an American of equal rate, Captain Broke had cruised off the port of Boston during the spring of 1813, hoping to meet one of the American frigates. On the night of April 30th the *President*, Captain John Rodgers, and the *Congress*, Captain Smith, eluded the British blockading squadron and got to sea, leaving only the *Constitution* and the *Chesapeake* in that port, the former undergoing extensive repairs and with only her mainmast in, and the latter nearly ready for sea. Anxious to try the fortunes of war in single combat, and fearing that the *Chesapeake* also would get to sea in spite of the vigilance of British cruisers, Captain Broke ordered all his consorts away where they could not interfere, and then wrote a challenge to Captain Lawrence and sent it in by Eben Slocum, one of the American prisoners in the *Shannon*. Slocum set out in a boat and landed at Marblehead, from which place he forwarded the letter to Boston; but before it arrived Captain Lawrence had received peremptory orders from Washington to sail at the earliest possible moment.

Tuesday morning, June 1, 1813, broke over the islands and shores of Boston harbor in unclouded summer loveliness. As the sun cast its welcomed rays of light over the gently heaving bosom of the bay a faint breeze rippled the waters and floated through the rigging of the shipping, which was strung with the sailors' "Monday wash." The night before and several days preceding had been rainy and foggy, so that the blockading squadron had been lost to view, but as the mists cleared away at the dawn of this momentous day the sentry at the fort turned his gaze seaward. A few hazy mists still clustered around the lighthouse—the guide of friend and foe alike—but in the offing, in full view of the town, a solitary frigate was seen standing to and

fro, in quiet reaches, across the bay, as if daring the Americans to come out and give battle. It was the *Shannon* awaiting an answer to her challenge. The news quickly spread among the townsfolk that a single British frigate presumed to blockade the harbor of Boston while two such ships as the *Constitution* and *Chesapeake* were in port. Lawrence learned of this while breakfasting with a friend. He was not a man to be blockaded by a single frigate, and he did not hesitate to seize this opportunity of getting to sea before other British ships appeared off the harbor. Hastily leaving the table, he made his way to the wharf, accompanied by his two youthful sons, and bidding them an affectionate adieu he put off to his ship, where he gave orders to prepare for immediate sailing. Boats laden with supplies and delinquent seamen were soon pulling hurriedly to and from the frigate, while the wharf was crowded with an excited throng of people eagerly discussing the chances of the impending conflict, others made off to different points of observation along the shore to get a better view of the expected battle.

Just as the last boat-load of seamen, amid the cheers and hand-waving of the crowd, was putting off from the landing, a negro, who had spent most of his life in Nova Scotia, called out to a friend in the boat, "Good-by, Sam. You's goin' to Halifax before you comes back to Bostaing. Gib my lub to requiring friends and tell 'em I's berry well." The ominous import of this message enraged the people around him, and the negro narrowly escaped with his life.

Before giving the order to weigh anchor Captain Lawrence penned the following dispatch to the Secretary of the Navy: "Since I had the honor of addressing you last I have been detained for want of men. I am now getting under way, and shall endeavor to carry into execution the instructions you have honored me with. An English frigate is now in sight from my

deck. I have sent a pilot boat out to reconnoiter, and should she prove to be alone I am in hopes of giving a good account of her before night." This was the last letter ever written by Captain Lawrence. On the return of the pilot boat with the announcement that no other frigates were in concealment behind the headlands in the vicinity, Captain Lawrence gave the order to weigh anchor, and the frigate stood down the bay.

Now that the *Chesapeake* had severed all communications with the shore and was standing out to sea with the avowed purpose of engaging the enemy, her people began to realize the condition of the ship. Their commander had arrived in Boston only ten days before, and was totally unacquainted with his officers, men or ship. The first lieutenant, Octavius Augustus Page, of Virginia, an officer of experience, was confined on shore with lung fever, from which he died three days afterward, aged twenty-eight. His place was filled by Third-Lieutenant Augustus C. Ludlow, who, though an officer of merit, was scarcely twenty-one years of age,[1] and who was in a strange and new position—a position most important in a frigate so far as navigating the ship and handling the men were concerned, but especially important in breaking in and disciplining a crew. Second-Lieutenant Thompson was absent on account of his health, and Acting-Lieutenants Nicholson and Pearce also were absent for the same reason. George Budd, the only commissioned sea officer of experience in the ship, was made second lieutenant. The places of third and fourth lieutenants were vacant, and were supplied by Midshipmen William Cox and Edward J. Ballard, who now served in these capacities for the first time.

In consequence of the *Chesapeake's* bad repute, it was with the greatest difficulty that men could be induced to serve in her, especially since seamen at that

[1] Ludlow's Monument, Trinity churchyard, New York City.

time were so scarce that even the best frigates were embarrassed to fill out their complements. The *Chesapeake's* crew, as finally brought together, was composed in a large part of landsmen, foreigners—the boatswain's mate being a Portuguese—and the least desirable sailors in port. Captain Broke, in a letter to Admiral H. Hotham, dated September 24, 1813, said: "Simpson, gunner's mate of the *Chesapeake*, says he delivered the keys of the fore magazine up to Lieutenant Falkiner [of the *Shannon*] directly the ship was taken, or *before*." Even when a newly enlisted ship's company is composed of experienced officers and able seamen there must be more or less confusion for the first few days after leaving port. It takes time for the officers to get accustomed to the habits of their commander and the men to learn their officers' methods of carrying on discipline. The peculiarities of the vessel have to be discovered, the arrangement of her armament must be mastered, possible changes made in the watch and station bills to secure the best advantage, and a thousand and one little improvements effected which only experience can suggest. Owing to the irregularity in the uniforms, if not the entire lack of uniformity in dress of both officers and seamen in the American war vessels of that day, it was especially necessary that the officers and men should become thoroughly familiar with each other's faces, lest in the confusion of battle they should be unable to distinguish between friends and foes. So ignorant were the officers of the *Chesapeake* of their own men, that one of her lieutenants joined a party of British boarders supposing them to be Americans. Besides this unfortunate condition of the ship, a large proportion of the sailors, in keeping with their time-honored custom of getting intoxicated before leaving port on an extended voyage, were lying round the ship in a drunken stupor from which even the excitement and turmoil of battle did not arouse them, as is seen in Captain Brenton's Naval History,

when he says, "Many of the prisoners were drunk and riotous."

Captain Lawrence was aware of the disorderly condition of his ship, and naval officers who accompanied him to the wharf warned him of the risk of giving battle under such circumstances. "Be cautious," they said; "take heed. We know every British ship on the station except the *Shannon*." But Captain Lawrence was determined on the meeting, for he regarded the appearance of the frigate as appealing to his sense of honor, inasmuch as he, only six months before, had sent a challenge to Captain Greene, of the sloop of war *Bonne Citoyenne*, off Bahia. The challenge sent by Captain Broke through Eben Slocum did not arrive in Boston until some time after the *Chesapeake* sailed, so that Captain Lawrence did not receive it.[1] Had he known that the British commander had left the selection of time and place to him, "at any bearing and distance you please to fix off the south breakers of Nantucket or the shoal on St. George's Banks," he undoubtedly would have postponed the meeting until he could accustom his men to act together and to perform the ordinary duties of seamanship and gunnery. As it was, the *Chesapeake* went out to meet the *Shannon* not in response to Captain Broke's challenge, but as if the two vessels had casually met off the harbor.

All this time an animated scene was taking place in the British frigate. Captain Broke had long desired to meet an American cruiser of the same rate and had long prepared for the meeting. This was to be the greatest day of his life. At early dawn he climbed into the *Shannon's* tops and eagerly scanned the harbor to see if the *Chesapeake*, aided by the fog and the night, had given him the slip as the *President* and *Congress* had done some weeks before when the entire British blockading squadron was collected off the port. The lofty,

[1] Washington Irving, Spanish Papers, vol. ii, p. 46.

tapering masts and the widespread yards of a frigate were soon descried through the breaking mists, showing that the *Chesapeake* was still in the harbor, but beside the loosened foresail, which in the light currents of air was lazily bulging out and falling flat against the mast, there were no signs of unwonted activity. Seeing no occasion for immediate action, Captain Broke descended into his cabin for breakfast and allowed the usual routine of the ship to begin. At ten o'clock the beat to quarters rattled along the decks of the British frigate and sent its sharp summons down the hatchways, and the men were soon hurrying to their stations to go through their regular morning drill. At noon the men went to dinner; but just as they were seated the words "She's coming out!" spread like wildfire from one end of the ship to the other, and the officers and men hastened on deck to gaze on the welcomed sight. Nor were they disappointed. Sail after sail was unfurled on the towering masts of the American frigate and sheeted home until the noble ship was bending under a cloud of canvas. Soon flags were defiantly run up to her mastheads, and with all the speed of the ebbing tide and the light breeze she stood down the bay, attended by numerous pleasure craft filled with people anxious to witness a naval engagement.

Captain Broke silently and thoughtfully descended into his cabin and there made his personal arrangements for the battle. The Rev. Dr. Brighton says: "What passed in that solemn hour no living creature now on earth can tell, but we know enough of the warrior to feel assured that he committed himself and the wife and children then sleeping the sleep of the peaceful in distant England to the great God he had so long confessed and honored." Returning to the deck after a brief absence, the British commander took a position on the break of the quarter-deck and called his crew aft. The men of the upper-deck quarters stood in front of him and along the gangways, while the men of

the main deck assembled below, the marines being drawn up in line at the great guns. Captain Broke then said: "Shannons! You know that from various causes the Americans have lately triumphed on several occasions over the British flag. This will not daunt you. But they have said that the English have forgotten the way to fight. You will let them know to-day that there are Englishmen in the *Shannon* who still know how to fight. Fire into her quarters, main deck into main deck, quarter-deck into quarter-deck. Kill the men, and the ship is yours. Don't cheer. Go quietly to your quarters. You have the blood of hundreds of your countrymen to avenge." A dead silence rested over the *Shannon's* deck at the close of these words, and all went to their stations feeling that they had a foe worthy of their steel. First-Lieutenant Watt then went forward and placed a white ensign on the capstan, as had been his custom whenever preparing for action, remarking, "That is to hoist over the enemy's colors."

Scarcely had the *Chesapeake* rounded the lighthouse, at one o'clock in the afternoon, when Captain Lawrence got a foretaste of the quality of his crew. After hoisting a flag with the motto "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights,"[1] he gave them, according to custom, a short harangue. In the midst of his speech he was interrupted by the loud murmurs and the mutinous attitude of his men. When allowed to finish his remarks, "a scoundrel Portuguese who was boatswain's mate"[2] spoke up in an insolent manner and demanded, among other things, prize money which had been

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[1] It seems almost superfluous to remark that the phrase "free trade" had an entirely different meaning from that which it bears to-day, meaning at that time that American merchants had a right to sail on the high seas without being subject to delays and the confiscation of their merchandise by British cruisers wherever found.

[2] Washington Irving, Spanish Papers, vol. ii, p. 47; also Brighton's Memoirs of Admiral Broke, p. 165.

due to some of their number several weeks. Here was an awakening for Captain Lawrence: an enemy in a part of his crew and a powerful foe awaiting him in the offing. But to such a nature as Lawrence possessed, to retire in the face of the enemy and meet the cold glances of his countrymen after he had set out with the avowed determination of engaging, was worse than death. Flight was out of the question, so the purser was ordered to issue prize checks, while to defeat and death went the haughty Lawrence. Filled with gloomy forebodings by the dastardly conduct of his crew, deeply wounded by the treachery of the men on whom he relied, Captain Lawrence bravely faced his doom. "Colossal in figure, and with muscular power superior to most men," he endeavored to infuse his own indomitable courage into the drooping spirits around him; but to the close observer it must have been apparent that he did not possess the confidence which he so manfully attempted to inspire.

The calm deliberation with which the American and English commanders went out to seek each other's life, and the earnestness with which they urged their officers and men to steep their hands in the blood of their fellow-beings, form one of the somber pictures of naval history. Lawrence was the youngest son of John Lawrence, Esquire, counselor-at-law at Burlington, N. J., and was the second in command at the celebrated capture of the *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli. Broke was the descendant of an ancient family which had lived in Broke Hall, England, over three hundred and fifty years, and for four hundred years at Leighton. Both were men in the prime of manhood, Lawrence in his thirty-second year and Broke in his thirty-seventh. Both were models of chivalry and manly grace; both were held in the highest estimation in their profession. Lawrence had just taken an affectionate farewell of his two sons, and an hour later was urging his men to "*Peacock* them! *Peacock* them!"

Broke but a short time before had committed his wife to God's mercy, and soon afterward was urging his crew to "Kill the men! kill the men!" Both were men of the kindliest feelings and most tender affections; both acknowledged the justice of the cause for which the Americans were contending; yet with steady determination they went out at the head of their ships' companies to take each other's life. A few hours afterward, when Captain Broke fell on the *Chesapeake's* decks fainting, and covered with his own blood, his lieutenants, on loosening his clothes, found a small blue-silk case suspended around his neck. It contained a lock of his wife's hair.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the frigates were seven miles apart, and half an hour later the *Chesapeake* hauled up and fired a gun, intimating her readiness to begin the action. At five o'clock she took in her royal and topgallant sails and sent down her royal yards. At 5.10 P. M.,[1] being about eighteen miles east of Boston Lighthouse, the *Shannon* beat to quarters, and twenty minutes later hauled up her courses, with her head to the southeast, and lay-to under her topsails and jib, the latter flowing and the spanker hanging by the throat brail only, ready for hauling out. "Lawrence displayed great skill and tactics when closing with us to prevent our fire, which, however, we did not attempt, for Broke had given orders not to fire whilst the gallant fellow keeps his head toward us, and so we waited in silence."[2] The sun was setting, and the *Chesapeake*, being to the west of her foe, threw the shadow of her sails far ahead, and finally they passed over the decks of the British frigate, darkening her main-deck ports and throwing a chill over

[1] *Shannon's* log.

[2] Sir Provo Wallis to the author. Sir Provo was second lieutenant in the *Shannon*. He died February 13, 1892, at his home, Funtington House, Chichester, England, in his one hundred and first year, at which time he was the senior admiral of the British navy.

the men stationed at the guns. She was now so near her foe that the rippling of the waters against her bow could be distinctly heard by those in the British frigate.

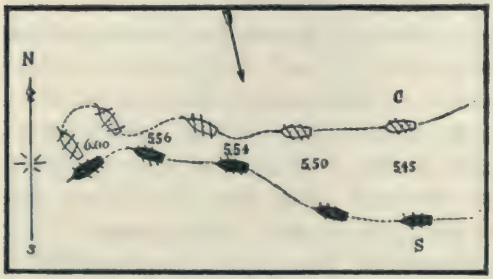


Diagram of the battle.

For some time Captain Broke was in doubt as to whether the *Chesapeake* would run down under the *Shannon's* stern and rake or come fairly alongside. The American frigate, however, disdained the advantage, and holding on her course ranged up off the *Shannon's* beam. Seeing that Lawrence was about to engage in a fair yard-arm and yard-arm action, Captain Broke stepped to the skylight on his quarter-deck and ordered the gunners on the deck below "to fire on the enemy as soon as the guns bore on his second bow port." Allen, in his Battles of the British Navy, says: "The *Shannon's* aftermost guns on the main deck were loaded with two round shot and a keg of one hundred and fifty musket balls; the next gun had one round shot and one double-headed shot, and so on alternately with every gun on the main deck."[1] At a quarter before six"[2] the bow of the *Chesapeake* began to double on the *Shannon's* quarter and the latter opened fire, one gun after the other, from the aftermost gun to the bow. The effect of this fire, "as witnessed from the *Shannon's* tops, was truly withering. A hurricane of shot, splinters, torn hammocks, cut rigging and wreck of every kind was hurled like a cloud across the deck." The *Chesapeake* did not immediately reply, but having secured a favorable position she also delivered her

[1] Vol. ii, p. 427, note. [2] Official report of Lieutenant Budd.

broadside with tremendous effect. Both ships then kept up a furious cannonade for several minutes.

At the first broadside Captain Lawrence, while standing on a carronade slide, was severely wounded in the leg, but refused to go below, and, supporting himself on the companion way, continued in command of his ship. At the same time William Augustus White, the sailing-master, was killed. The firing was so close and rapid that in a few minutes half of the American officers were either killed or wounded. The British frigate had also suffered heavily. One 12-pound shot entered her lower port sill on the quarter where the ninth gun was being worked; it passed through the gun carriage and knocked out the quoin, which, striking the captain of the gun on the knee, broke the knee-cap and drove the fragments of bone half way up his thigh. At the same instant Captain Broke was stepping over the train tackle of this gun, and it is believed that the shot passed between his legs. One 32-pound shot, after piercing the *Shannon's* hull, passed through one of the gun-room cabins, knocked out a part of the bulkhead and injured a magazine man who was stationed at a powder scuttle. The shot, then nearly spent, rolled toward the powder scuttles and would have fallen in the magazine passage had not a man turned it away with his foot. One of the men at the ninth gun was struck by a grape shot, which piercing him below the stomach entered the cavity of the body, but the brave fellow continued the task of loading his gun. He would not go below, and was led to an arm chest and there lay down in dreadful agony, begging those about him to put their hands into the wound and take out the shot, saying, "I shall do well enough if you will only do that." He died in a few minutes. The *Shannon's* marines at this moment were drawn up along the gangway, the first division on the starboard side, under the command of First-Lieutenant Johns, and the second division on the port gangway, commanded

by Second-Lieutenant Law, and they had been ordered to move to the forecastle, as it was thought that the *Chesapeake* might fall aboard the *Shannon* at that point. At this moment a 32-pound shot struck the top of the stern boat and made a host of splinters out of it, for a moment throwing the marines into confusion. The same shot came through the top of the forecastle and knocked away all the lining planks. Another shot entered the ship diagonally, crippling the port-cabin guns, tearing down the beams overhead, and passing out on the starboard side. The *Chesapeake* had a kind of double transom formed by a transverse timber being laid athwart the stern frame, and inside of this was the usual stern-frame woodwork. It formed a shelf or flat surface in the after gun room, just below the stern ports. This woodwork, from the inside to the out, must have been five feet thick. An 18-pound shot entered diagonally and penetrated it nearly seven feet.

The headway that the *Chesapeake* had acquired in coming into action, and the calm she produced on the *Shannon's* sails when fairly alongside, carried the American frigate ahead of her antagonist, and, desiring to preserve the weather gage so as to cripple the *Shannon* with his dismantling shot, Captain Lawrence hauled up a little. But as her jib sheet and fore-topsail tie were shot away, and her helm was unattended by reason of the death of the men at her wheel, the *Chesapeake* came up so sharply to the wind as to deaden her headway completely, and in consequence she was taken aback and given sternboard, with her stern and quarters exposed to the *Shannon's* broadside. At this moment the British delivered their most effective fire, not only raking the *Chesapeake* fore and aft with their quarter guns and beating in her stern ports, but at the same time maintaining a tremendous diagonal fire from their forward guns across the decks of the American frigate. This fire rapidly increased the American list of killed or wounded: it now included Captain Law-

rence, Acting First-Lieutenant Ludlow, who was twice wounded by grape and musketry; Acting Fourth-Lieutenant Ballard, mortally wounded; Lieutenant of Marines James Broom, mortally wounded; Sailing-Master William Augustus White and Peter Adams, the boatswain (the latter having served in the *Constitution* during her fight with the *Guerrière*), killed at the first broadside; Midshipmen Pollard Hopewell, John Evans, Jr., and Daniel Burnham also killed; Midshipmen William A. Weaver, Edmund M. Russell and William Barry wounded. Second-Lieutenant Budd and Acting Third-Lieutenant Cox were below in charge of their divisions. The early loss of the sailing-master and boatswain was an irretrievable disaster, as there were so few able seamen in the ship, and there is no doubt that this was the cause of the *Chesapeake's* rigging and sails remaining entangled at this critical moment. Seeing that the ships were about to foul, Boatswain Stevens, of the *Shannon*, who had fought under Rodney, endeavored to lash the two ships together, but the Americans on the *Chesapeake's* quarter-deck hacked off his left arm with their cutlasses, besides mortally wounding him.

Captain Lawrence now gave the order for the boarders to be called, but the bugler, a negro named George Brown, was not to be found; and at the same moment an arm chest on the quarter-deck was blown up by a hand grenade thrown from the *Shannon* which caused additional confusion. After several precious minutes had been wasted in a search for the bugler he was discovered under the stern launch, paralyzed with terror and utterly incapable of calling the boarders. Before an oral order could be conveyed below, the frigates fouled; and Captain Broke, seeing that the *Chesapeake's* boarders were not in readiness, and having all his marines assembled in the gangway, and the seamen in the boats and at the booms in readiness to spring, threw down his trumpet, and, calling out "Fol-

low me who can!" stepped aboard the *Chesapeake's* quarter-deck.

At this juncture Captain Lawrence, "fatally conspicuous by the white vest and other habiliments he had assumed,"[1] was mortally wounded and was carried below. Even in the cockpit he continued to issue orders, shouting: "Keep the guns going!" "Fight her till she strikes or sinks!" And when he learned that the enemy had carried the spar deck, he exclaimed: "Then the officers of the deck haven't toed the mark. The *Shannon* was whipped when I left the deck." His last words were, "Don't give up the ship!"[2]

The few men on the *Chesapeake's* quarter-deck made a "desperate and disorderly resistance," but, not being supported by their comrades below, were soon cut to pieces. The only officer on deck was Mr. Ludlow, and he was so weak from loss of blood as to be on the point of fainting. Samuel Livermore, of Boston, who from a personal attachment to Captain Lawrence had accompanied him as chaplain, seeing the fall of his beloved chief, seized a pistol, and, though almost the only American on the quarter-deck, deliberately fired at the British commander, who was gallantly leading

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[1] Brighton's Memoirs of Admiral Broke, p. 165.

[2] This exclamation, "Don't give up the ship!" is regarded by some writers as a myth. With a view of determining this question the author inquired of Sir Provo Wallis, a survivor of the battle, and was authorized by him to publish the following statement: "We heard that when they were carrying Captain Lawrence below, mortally wounded, he uttered the words, 'Don't give up the ship!'" It hardly seems possible that such a myth could be invented during the great excitement consequent on the termination of the battle and immediately after have reached the ears of the British officers. Myths of this character are generally the productions of some gifted pen when writing, in the peaceful security of a study, of events long after their occurrence. An officer of the *Chesapeake*, writing in reference to the voyage of these ships from Boston to Halifax, remarks: "Captain Broke and Captain Lawrence were both delirious from their wounds. When Captain Lawrence could speak, he would say, 'Don't give up the ship!' Evidently the words were firmly impressed on his mind at the time of the battle."

his boarders, and then dashed at the enemy with a broadsword. The bullet missed its mark, but struck a seaman. Captain Broke, with a "backward stroke of his good and mighty Toledo blade,"[1] felled the patriot to the deck. The enemy then charged along both gangways to the *Chesapeake's* forecastle.

A messenger now came rushing into the first division of the gun deck below, and informed Lieutenant Budd for the first time that the enemy had boarded and that all hands were called. Mr. Budd instantly called his men, but the raw hands, influenced by the foreigners, held back, while the Portuguese boatswain's mate, who led in the murmurs about the prize checks, removed the gratings of the berth deck, and, shouting, "So much for not paying men prize money," ran below, followed by many of the other malcontents. Some American seamen, however, followed Lieutenant Budd on deck, where they arrived only in time to see their gallant commander carried below and the enemy in full possession of the quarter-deck. Lieutenant Budd, with a view of separating the frigates and so cutting off the British boarders from support, ordered the fore tacks to be hauled aboard; but the rigging had become so entangled that it was impossible to perform the manœuvre. On attempting to gain the quarter-deck, he was wounded and hurled to the deck below, badly stunned.

All this time the *Chesapeake's* head had been gradually swinging around, and she now broke away from her lashings and forged across the *Shannon's* bow. This left fifty or sixty Englishmen in the American frigate cut off from support and retreat, and, had the *Chesapeake* been manned by a thoroughbred American crew, the Englishmen might soon have been overpowered and the result of the action of June 1, 1813, would have been far different. To add to the confusion of

[1] Brighton's Memoirs of Admiral Broke.

the English, one of their boarders hauled down the American colors and hoisted it again with the white ensign under instead of over it. Seeing this, the *Shannon* re-opened fire, and at the first discharge took off the head of her first lieutenant, George Thomas L. Watt, who was standing on the *Chesapeake's* quarter-deck, besides killing or wounding other Englishmen near him.

Seeing the difficulty the enemy was in, a few Americans on the forecastle made a desperate struggle to regain the ship. The British rallied to the forecastle, and a short but fierce encounter took place. In the *mêlèe* Captain Broke was felled to the deck with the blow of a cutlass on the head which laid bare several inches of his brain. An American seaman fatally wounded was also thrown to the deck beside the British commander, and although in his death agonies he still continued to fight. Both of these men were weak from loss of blood, so that their struggle was feeble, but none the less deadly in purpose. The American grappling with the British commander soon got the uppermost, and, having picked up a bayonet, he raised the weapon with fast ebbing strength to strike the fatal blow, while Captain Broke endeavored to draw his dagger. At this moment a British marine rushed up, and, supposing the American was underneath, was about to run a bayonet through his own commander, when Captain Broke called out, "Poh! poh! You fool! Don't you know your captain?" Upon which the marine changed the direction of the blow and laid the American out on the deck. Owing to the great loss of American officers, it is doubtful if there was any formal surrender; certainly the news of it was not promptly conveyed to the seamen in the different parts of the ship, and they received no orders to desist from fighting. In consequence of this confusion a British marine standing guard at the main hatchway was shot by an American from below, and the British



The struggle on the forecastle.
From Brighton's Memoirs of Sir Philip Broke.

retaliated by pouring in a volley of musketry. About this time Acting Third-Lieutenant Cox gained the deck with a few American seamen and joined the boarders, supposing them to be the *Chesapeake's* men, but he was quickly undeceived by saber cuts.

The English were now in complete possession of the ship. Lieutenant Wallis, before the action opened, handed his watch to a seaman who was stationed in the magazine, remarking: "You will be safe; should anything happen to me, give this to my father." By this watch the seaman timed the firing, and "by it we knew that the cannonading lasted only eleven minutes."[1] The boarding occupied only a few minutes, so that Lieutenant Budd's official report that the action lasted fifteen minutes is fully corroborated.

The *Chesapeake's* armament, as given by Sir Provo Wallis, who took command of her immediately upon her surrender, and remained there for a week afterward, was: "Main deck, twenty-eight long 18-pounders; quarter-deck, sixteen short 32-pounders; forecastle, four short 32-pounders and one long 18-pounder, forty-nine guns in all";[2] giving a total actual weight of five hundred and forty pounds to the broadside. Out of her complement of three hundred and forty men she lost forty-seven killed and ninety-nine wounded,[3] and fourteen of the latter afterward died. Perhaps the fact that reflects most credit is that the loss was chiefly confined to the American portion of the crew, the foreigners skulking about the ship seeking to escape their own officers as well as the enemy. Every officer was either killed or wounded so early in the action that no one was left to throw the signal-book overboard when the enemy boarded, so that the English came into possession of all the American private signals. This book had been placed on the cabin table and shotted, ready

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[1] Admiral Wallis to the author. [2] Ibid.
[3] Official report of Lieutenant Budd.

to be thrown overboard. Five of the *Chesapeake's* men were held as deserters; one of them was executed, and the others were sentenced to be flogged through the fleet. The *Shannon* carried twenty-eight long 18-pounders, four long 9-pounders, one long 6-pounder, sixteen short 32-pounders and three short 12-pounders, making in all fifty-two guns, or five hundred and forty-seven pounds to the broadside.[1] Her complement is given at three hundred and thirty, out of which she lost twenty-four killed and fifty-nine wounded;[2] total, eighty-three. Three of the British sailors had their heads taken off by round shot, and several of them were literally cut in two. The *Chesapeake* was struck by twenty-five 32-pound shot, twenty-nine 18-pound shot, two 9-pound shot and three hundred and six grapeshot, many of the round shot taking effect at the water's edge. On her weather side only one shroud was left. The *Shannon* was struck by twelve 18-pound shot, thirteen 32-pound shot, fourteen bar shot and one hundred and nineteen grapeshot.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Chesapeake:	49	540	340	47	99	146	Time
Shannon:	52	547	330	24	59	83	15m.

"There has been, no doubt, a great deal of trash on that subject [action between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon*] given to the world."[3] Unfortunately this is far from an exaggeration of the case. Perhaps no other naval encounter of this war called from contemporary writers and newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic so much misrepresentation and exaggera-

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 53. James, it will be again remarked, has departed from the figures given in the official report of Captain Broke, which gives the *Shannon* but forty-nine guns. James says "the *Shannon* certainly mounted fifty-two guns." Yonge, in his Naval History, says: "The *Shannon* was a fine frigate, with fifty-two guns."

[2] Official report of Captain Broke. [3] Admiral Wallis to the author.

tion. But this can be overlooked on the plea of the intense bitterness then existing between the two peoples. The Americans were filled with profound gloom and an unreasonable loss of confidence in their navy, while the English gave vent to extravagant demonstrations of joy, simply because an English frigate had captured an American of the same force. The news was carried to England in the brig *Nova Scotia*, Lieutenant Bartholomew Kent, which sailed from Halifax June 12th, and arrived at Plymouth July 7th. On the following evening Lord Cochrane was making severe criticisms in Parliament on the administration of the naval war with the United States, when Mr. Croker arose to answer him with the announcement that the *Shannon* had captured the *Chesapeake*. This was received with the "loudest and most cordial acclamations from every part of the House." The city of London presented to Captain Broke a sword and the freedom of the city, the Tower guns were fired, and Captain Broke was made a baronet of the United Kingdom, and soon afterward a Knight Commander of the Bath. He and his descendants were allowed to bear the following crest of honorable augmentation, "Issuant from a naval crown, a dexter arm embowed, encircled by a wreath of laurel, the hand grasping a trident erect"; the motto was "*Sævumque tridentem servamus.*" Congress voted a gold medal to the nearest male descendant of Captain Lawrence.

But above all partisan discussion one fact is clear, which is, that the condition of the *Chesapeake* did not justify an action with the *Shannon* on the 1st of June, 1813. It is to be feared that Captain Lawrence had fallen into the error which proved to be the stumbling-block of British commanders in the early part of this war—an underestimation of his opponent's prowess and an overestimation of his own. At the beginning of the contest the British navy had attained its highest degree of success. Now that the American navy had

won five consecutive and signal victories over the mistress of the ocean in six months, the national pride was unduly puffed up, and it needed but a single defeat to prick the bubble of our vanity. Just at the culmination of this series of brilliant victories, Captain Lawrence returned from a highly successful cruise. His experience with the *Bonne Citoyenne* and the *Espiègle*, and his splendid and easy victory over the *Peacock*, had not tended to raise the overboasted British naval prowess in his estimation; and, as he came home flushed with victory and on the crest wave of national success, it is not surprising that he thought the *Chesapeake*, even in her wretched condition, was able to cope with the *Shannon*. This seems the more probable when we remember that Captain Lawrence could not have known of the superb order in which the latter frigate was kept.

M. De la Gravière, commenting on this action in his Guerres Maritimes, vol. ii, page 272, says: "Captain Broke had commanded the *Shannon* for nearly seven years; Captain Lawrence had commanded the *Chesapeake* for but a few days. The *Shannon* had cruised for eighteen months on the coast of America; the *Chesapeake* was newly out of harbor. The *Shannon* had a crew long accustomed to habits of strict obedience; the *Chesapeake* was manned by men who had just been engaged in mutiny. The Americans were wrong to accuse Fortune on this occasion. Fortune was not fickle, she was merely logical. The *Shannon* captured the *Chesapeake* on June 1, 1813, but on September 14, 1806, when he took command of his frigate, Captain Broke had begun to prepare the glorious termination of the bloody affair."

Some years after this battle a British naval officer, while dining at the table of the Duke of Wellington, was indulging in extravagant comments on Broke's victory and deprecating the American naval victories in this war. Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin, who was pres-

ent, listened to the foolish talk with growing impatience, and finally remarked: "It was a lucky thing for your friend Broke that he fell in with the unprepared *Chesapeake*, and not with Hull and the *Constitution*. If he had, no Tower guns would have been heard celebrating the *Shannon's* victory."

The passage of the two ships to Nova Scotia was melancholy for both the victors and the vanquished. The quiet of the twilight was disturbed by the groans of the wounded, and as night advanced the moon rose, bringing out in its cold light the sanguinary work of the day. Splashes of blood were seen on the bulwarks, masts, gangways and gun-carriages. Coils of rope were matted with gore as if in a slaughter-house; dead men were lying around the decks, staring with sightless eyeballs into vacancy; pieces of skin and hair adhered to different portions of the ship, and in one place the fingers of a man protruded from the bulwarks as if thrust through the side of the frigate. The survivors of the battle moved about with torn clothing, bandaged heads and splinted arms, and those who were unhurt were busily engaged in splicing the rigging and repairing damages. At nine o'clock the dead in both frigates were collected at the gangway, shotted and bound in canvas, and at the sublime words of the liturgy, "to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body, when the sea shall give up her dead," they were rapidly yet tenderly dropped overboard one after another into the dark sea.

In the foggy weather of the second evening the monotony of the voyage was suddenly broken aboard the *Shannon* by the shrill piping of the tune Yankee Doodle. The American prisoners in the hold pricked up their ears in eager anticipation of recapture, while the British, alarmed at the unwonted tune, hastily armed and tumbled up on deck to learn the cause of it. Their anxiety was enhanced by the belief that the frigates *President* and *Congress* were in that

vicinity, and they thought it possible that these ships might have come near them unawares in the heavy fog, and that the piping of the American tune might be from one of the frigates. Only the day before they had fallen in with two ships which at first were taken to be the American cruisers, but they proved to be the 74-gun ship of the line *Scepter* and the frigate *Loire*. The cause of this alarm, however, proved to be the *Shannon's* piper playing in his most elaborate style the tune that had startled his shipmates. He had been ordered to do this by Captain Broke himself, who quaintly remarked, "I thought nothing would cheer me up so much as that old tune."

Captain Lawrence received every kindness and attention from the British officers. His own cabin was so shattered that it could not be fitted up for him, so he was removed to the wardroom. Dr. Jack, the *Shannon's* surgeon who attended him, describes Lawrence as being "tractable, gentle and docile, as the brave always are under medical treatment. Few inquiries were necessary, but few as they were Lawrence anticipated nearly all, and steadily prognosticated his own decease. 'I know,' said he, 'why you ask that question; my own surgeon asked me the same, and I see from it that there is no hope for me.'" He died after suffering several days of intense bodily pain, and the more acute agony of a proud and wounded spirit. James Todd, of Portland, who saw Lawrence in Boston, described his appearance to Rear-Admiral George H. Preble as follows: "The day before the battle Captain Lawrence came into the shop where I was apprenticed, with a lieutenant, the latter desiring to have a miniature of Captain Lawrence mounted. During the conversation Captain Lawrence leaned his tall, manly figure over the showcase. He was a little under six feet, and broad across the shoulders, with a handsome manly face and dark hair, with side whiskers combed up, and shaved under the ears as was then the style.

His proportions were good and his movements were graceful, and he carried himself as one born to command. The miniature was left to be called for, but the battle was fought the next day and they never returned."[1]

It was Sunday morning when the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon* appeared off Halifax harbor. Lawrence, wrapped in the American colors, lay dead on the quarter-deck of the *Chesapeake*. Broke, delirious and unconscious, was in the *Shannon's* cabin. Divine service was being held in St. Paul's Church, when a man was seen to enter hurriedly, whisper to a friend in the garrison pew and hastily withdraw. The effect was electrical; the news flashed from pew to pew, and one by one the worshipers left the church, until finally the clergyman, scarcely waiting to divest himself of his surplice, also found his way down to the wharf. "In passing up the bay," wrote one of the American officers, "there was a great shout from the people, for they thought our prize was the 44-gun frigate *President*, which had incurred their cordial dislike; but when they heard that it was the *Chesapeake*, and that Lawrence, her commander, was dead, not a huzza was heard, except, I believe, from a brig lying at anchor. Captain Lawrence was highly respected for his humanity to the crew of the *Peacock*, and marks of real grief were seen in the countenances of all the inhabitants I had a chance to see. I can truly say that all appeared to lament his death, and I heard several say that they considered the blood which had been shed on the *Chesapeake's* deck as being as dear to them as that of their own countrymen. On the day of the funeral I saw three mahogany coffins carried on board the *Chesapeake*. In one of them the remains of Captain Lawrence were placed and then rowed in a twenty-oared barge, to minute strokes, to the shore, followed by a procession of

[1] Rear-Admiral Preble, in the United Service Magazine, p. 500.

boats at respectful distances. After landing at King's Wharf, a regiment of troops and a full band of music playing the Dead March in Saul took up the line of march. Six of the oldest navy officers in port, one of them being Lieutenant Samuel Blythe, afterward killed in the *Boxer* in her action with the *Enterprise*, carried the pall, which was one of the colors of the *Chesapeake*, and on top of the coffin was placed Lawrence's sword. The procession was very long, and everything was conducted in the most solemn and respectful manner, and the wounded officers of both nations, who followed the procession, made the scene very affecting. I never attended a funeral in my life when my feelings were so struck. There was not the least mark of exultation that I saw, even among the commonest people."



Lawrence's tomb.

About six weeks after this, George Crowninshield, Jr., and ten other masters of vessels sailed from Boston, in the brig *Henry*, under a flag of truce to Halifax, where the bodies of Lawrence and Ludlow were exhumed and brought to Boston and landed at India Wharf, and funeral services were held over them. The remains were then carried to New York, where they were escorted by a procession from the Battery, through Greenwich Street to Chambers Street, then down Broadway to Trinity churchyard, where they were interred.[1]

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[1] James Lawrence was born October 1, 1781, in Burlington, N. J., and was educated by his father for the law, but preferring the sea, he received a midshipman's warrant September 1, 1798, and served under Captain Tingey, in the 24-gun cruiser *Ganges*. Within two years he was made acting lieutenant, although he did not receive his commission until 1802. From 1802 to 1804 Lawrence distinguished himself while first lieutenant in the *Enterprise* in the attacks on the feluccas before Tripoli, May, 1802.

Captain Broke never fully recovered from the effects of his wounds. It was nearly four months before he was able to sail for England. He was not again actively engaged in the service, and spent the remaining years of his life in London, Shrubland Park (Lady Broke's previous home), and at Broke Hall, leading the quiet life of an English country gentleman. He died while on a visit to London, in Bayley's Hotel, Berkeley Square, on the night of January 2, 1841. Like Napoleon's, his spirit passed away during a tremendous storm.

An account of the celebrated action between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon* would not be complete without a brief sketch of the subsequent careers of these two ships. The *Shannon* was retained in the service only a short time after the War of 1812. Two frigates bearing the same name had been built for the royal navy and lost—one a 32-gun frigate, built in 1796 and wrecked in 1800, the other a 36-gun frigate, launched in 1800, which in the same year ran aground under the batteries of Cape La Hogue. The third *Shannon*, the one that fought the *Chesapeake*, was built in Chatham, Brindley's yard, in 1806, and some years after the War of 1812 was broken up.

The *Chesapeake* met a far different fate. After her capture by Captain Broke she was taken to England, and in 1820 her timbers were sold to John Prior, miller, of Wickham, Hants. Mr. Prior pulled down his mill at Wickham and erected a new one from the *Chesapeake's* timbers, which he found admirably adapted for the purpose. The deck beams were thirty-

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He was second in command in the memorable capture of the *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli. He crossed the Atlantic in 1805 in a gunboat, and in 1808 he became first lieutenant in the *Constitution*, and in the following year was commander of the *Vixen*, shortly after which he was promoted to the *Wasp*. His next ship was the *Argus*, and in 1811 he received the command of the *Hornet*, in which he achieved his brilliant victory over the *Peacock*. For this service he was made commander of the *Chesapeake*.

two feet long and eighteen inches square, and were placed, unaltered, horizontally in the mill. The purlins of the deck were about twelve feet long, and served without alterations for joists. Many of these timbers still bear the marks of the *Shannon's* grapeshot, and in some places the shot are to be seen deeply imbedded in the pitch pine. The metamorphosis of a sanguinary man-of-war into a peaceful flour mill is perhaps as near an approach to the Scriptural prophecy that spears and swords shall be beaten into plows and pruning-hooks as the conditions of modern civilization will allow.

The Rev. Dr. Brighton, in his Memoirs of Sir Philip B. V. Broke, gives the following account of a visit to this mill in 1864: "Nothing shiplike or of the sea was discernible from without the mill. A comely young Englishman of some eight and twenty years of age was coming forth to join his cricket club on a neighboring down, and this proved to be the owner of the *Chesapeake* Mill. A large cigar box, constructed from the polished pine of the old ship and bearing the inscription 'Chesapeake' in small brass nails, stood upon a table. The beams were pock-marked in many places with grapeshot. The mill was merrily going, but as I stood in the midst of this peaceful scene I remembered that, beyond all reasonable doubt, on one of these planks Lawrence fell in the writhing anguish of his mortal wound; on another, if not the same, Watt's head was carried away by a shot; and on others Broke lay ensanguined, and his assailants dead, while near by Ludlow must have poured out his life's blood. Thus pondering I stood, and still the busy hum went on, wheat passed beneath the stones, flour poured forth and the merry millers passed around their kindly smile and blithesome jest."

CHAPTER VIII.

OPERATIONS ON THE GREAT LAKES.

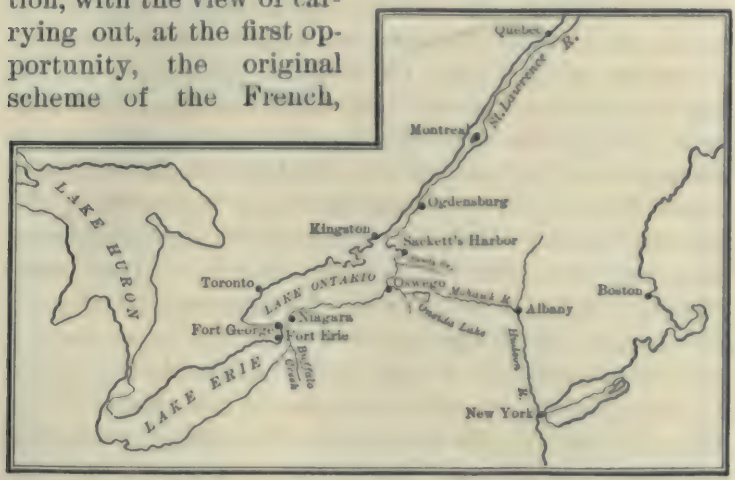
THE possession of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie was of vital importance both to the Americans and to the English, for through this channel re-enforcements and supplies were forwarded to their respective armies in the West. Perceiving the necessity of controlling these lakes, both governments, early in the war, took measures for building and maintaining a naval force there. In this the Americans had to surmount great difficulties. From the head of the Hudson to the shores of Lake Ontario there was a vast wilderness, through which no road had been cut, and the trail could be followed only by Indians and experienced hunters. The route taken by white men was along the waters of the Mohawk to Oneida Lake, from which place they reached Lake Ontario by Oswego River, thence coasting along the shores of the lake to Sackett's Harbor. The transportation of heavy ordnance, ammunition, stores and men along this difficult trail, besides being attended with many dangers, was possible only at a great outlay of time and money, and even after arrival at Sackett's Harbor, the American headquarters on Lake Ontario, the perils of the journey were by no means over. At that time Oswego consisted of only twenty-five houses, and Sackett's Harbor of a few huts and a blockhouse—places where money was unknown and where the circulating medium was salt, one barrel of it being computed at two dollars. These settlements, isolated by three hundred miles of wilderness, were in constant danger of being swept away by

fire, disease or famine, and were continually exposed to Indian assaults.

On the other hand, the English were able to reach these lakes with comparative ease. In accordance with the plan of the French ministers, when they held the Canadas and extensive tracts at the mouth of the Mississippi, to merge these provinces into one vast domain, a chain of trading posts had been established along the St. Lawrence, Lake Ontario, Lake Erie and the Ohio River, and down the Mississippi to New Orleans. By this means it was not only intended to cut off the English colonist from the West, but, as this mighty dominion became firmly established and its power grew in proportion to its size, it was hoped that it would crowd more and more on the English settlers, and eventually absorb them or sweep them into the Atlantic. As early as 1678 De la Salle launched a craft of ten tons on Lake Ontario, which was the first decked vessel ever on those waters, and in 1679 he launched another of sixty tons on Lake Erie. Nor was this scheme an idle fancy on the part of the French Government. No one was more sensible of the power that was gradually developing and tightening its folds around him than the English colonist. It is remarkable that the control of this boundless empire should have been contested by so few combatants, yet practically several hundred English and French settlers decided the occupation of the North American continent in favor of one race to the exclusion of the other. How deep-rooted the French power had become was seen when the Canadas passed under British rule. Their trading-posts formed nuclei of permanent settlements, which rapidly grew into villages all along these water-ways. While the English were building themselves up on the coast, the French had flourishing towns on the great rivers and inland seas, which continued to grow in size and number; and at the time of the War of 1812 there were prosperous towns of many

years growth scattered along the lakes in the possession of the British, affording secure headquarters and bases for operation. The principal English port on Lake Ontario was Kingston, at the northeastern extremity of the lake. Originally it was the old French trading post Frontenac, but in 1812 it was a town of nearly fifteen hundred inhabitants. Opposite Kingston, almost within sight, was the precarious hamlet of Sackett's Harbor.

The English ministry had maintained a naval force on these lakes since the close of the American Revolution, with the view of carrying out, at the first opportunity, the original scheme of the French,



Scene of the naval operations on the Great Lakes.

which was to extend Canadian dominion along the Great Lakes and down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans, thus cutting off the United States from the West. The London press, as will be seen by the following, already regarded the Great Lakes as belonging exclusively to Great Britain. "We must again and again call upon them [the ministers] to make arrangements for retrieving the temporary subversion of our superiority on the American lakes. They are a portion of our marine dominion, which must on no

account be yielded."[1] In 1812 the British naval force on Lake Ontario consisted of the 22-gun ship *Royal George*, the 16-gun ship *Prince Regent*, the 14-gun ship *Earl of Moira*, the 14-gun brig *Duke of Gloucester*, the 4-gun schooner *Seneca* and the 12-gun schooner *Simcoe*. Opposed to this squadron, the United States had only the 16-gun brig *Oneida*, Lieutenant Melancthon Taylor Woolsey, built as a revenue cutter by Christian Bergh and Henry Eckford, and launched at Oswego in 1809.

On the 19th of July the British vessels, under the command of Captain Earle, aggregating nearly eighty guns, sailed from Kingston with the avowed intention of taking or destroying the *Oneida*. Reaching the offing of Sackett's Harbor, they captured a custom-house boat, which was then sent in with a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the *Oneida* and the schooner *Lord Nelson* (which vessel had been captured by the *Oneida* in May, 1812, for violating the revenue laws), under penalty of laying the town in ashes. Lieutenant Woolsey refused to surrender his vessels, and attempted to escape from the harbor with a view of separating the British ships in a long chase, but the enemy closed the entrance of the port before he could make an offing. Beating back, he anchored near the shore, where his broadside could rake the British vessels as they entered the port. All the guns on the other side were then landed and formed into a battery for the further reception of the enemy. For several years an old 32-pound cannon had been lying on the shore, imbedded in the mud, which was called the "Old Sow." Lieutenant Woolsey caused this gun to be mounted on a hill that commanded the offing, and placed it under the command of Sailing-Master William Vaughan. As the Americans were destitute of 32-pound shot, they wrapped pieces of carpet around 24-pound shot in

[1] London Times, November 18, 1813.

order to make them fit the gun. The English stood on and off the harbor, keeping up a desultory fire at long range, which could be answered only by the 32-pounder on the hill. At one time a 32-pound shot landed near this battery, which Sergeant Spier picked up and fired back just as the *Royal George* was wearing, raking her fore and aft. It raised a shower of splinters as high as her mizzen topsail yard, killed fourteen men and wounded eighteen. After two hours of distant cannonading the British commander made sail for Kingston, abandoning the attempt to capture Sackett's Harbor, "which the *Royal George* alone, well manned and appointed, might easily have accomplished."[1]

The Americans soon fitted out their second prize, the *Julia*, armed with one long 32-pounder and two long 6-pounders, and on the evening of July 30th sent her to Ogdensburg with a crew of thirty men, under the command of Midshipman Henry Wells, with orders to convoy six schooners, varying from thirty to one hundred tons, which were to be fitted as gunboats. The *Julia* was piloted by Messrs. Vaughan and Dixon, and she also had a rifle corps commanded by Noadiah Hubbard. At three o'clock on the afternoon of July 31, while among the Thousand Islands, eleven miles above Ogdensburg, the *Julia* was attacked by the 14-gun ship *Earl of Moira* and the 14-gun brig *Duke of Gloucester*, and for three hours a desultory action was maintained. At one time the *Duke of Gloucester* hauled up within half a mile of the *Julia* and was running down to close, when two well-directed shot from the American 32-pounder induced her to sheer off. Both the British vessels then withdrew to the Canadian shore, leaving the *Julia* in undisputed possession of the river, and at eight o'clock that evening Midshipman Wells, with the aid of flashes of lightning, made his way to Ogdensburg, "having actually beat off, without losing a man,

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 102.

the *Earl of Moira* and the *Duke of Gloucester*."[1] The *Julia* was struck by only one shot, while the *Earl of Moira* was hulled several times. In the armistice that followed the *Julia* and the six schooners were taken to Sackett's Harbor.

On the 31st of August, 1812, Captain Isaac Chauncey, who had taken a prominent part in the war with Tripoli, was ordered to the command of the naval operations on the Great Lakes. At this time Captain Chauncey was in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, and on the 1st of September he dispatched over forty ship carpenters to Sackett's Harbor. On the 18th one hundred officers and seamen, with guns, munitions of war and stores, also began the tedious journey, and by the 6th of October Captain Chauncey arrived in person. Schooners of thirty to forty tons were immediately purchased and mounted with guns, and the sailors were initiated in the peculiarities of lake navigation. The schooners thus hastily fitted out were the *Hamilton*, the *Governor Tompkins*, the *Conquest*, the *Growler*, the *Julia* and the *Pert*. None of these vessels were adapted for war purposes, but the urgency of the occasion necessitated their employment. The keel of a 24-gun ship was then laid, so as to be ready for launching in the following spring.

Soon after Chauncey's arrival he dispatched Lieutenant Jesse Duncan Elliott to Lake Erie with instructions to purchase any vessel that could be procured, for the purpose of forming the nucleus of a naval force on that lake. The only armed American vessel that had been on Lake Erie was the brig *Adams*, and by the surrender of Michigan she fell into the enemy's hands, who took her into their service under the name *Detroit*. On the afternoon of October 7th, Lieutenant Elliott, observing that the *Detroit*, Lieutenant Roulette, and the *Caledonia*, commanded by Mr. Irvine, mounting

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 102.

two light guns, and manned by twelve men, had come down the lake and anchored at Fort Erie, determined to attempt their capture. Applying to Brigadier-General Smythe, commander of the American troops in that region, he obtained the necessary arms and ammunition for fifty sailors who arrived that afternoon, besides the services of fifty soldiers who volunteered, under the command of Captain Nathan Towson. Early in the evening, the party, embarking in two barges and several boats, pulled out of Buffalo Creek. Lieutenant Isaac Roach, of the artillery, and Ensign William Pressman, of the infantry, were in Lieutenant Elliott's boat, while Master's Mates William Peckham, J. E. McDonald, John S. Cummings, Edward Wilcox, and Boatswain's Mates Lawrence Hanson, John Rack and James Morell were in the other boats. In crossing the bar at the mouth of Buffalo Creek the barges grounded, but the men jumped out and the boats, thus lightened, were floated over. After making a wide detour, the men neared the object of the expedition about midnight. Greater caution was now exercised, but in spite of their care the leading boat, commanded by Sailing-Master Thomas Watts, while crossing the *Caledonia's* bow, was discovered and challenged by a sentinel. Further concealment being impossible, the men bent to their oars and dashed alongside, receiving two volleys of musketry. When they gained the deck of the schooner there was a short struggle, but the enemy was overpowered. The Americans then hastened to secure their prizes by cutting the moorings and towing them out. The *Caledonia* was brought safely over to the American side, but the *Detroit*, owing to the darkness, grounded on Squaw's Island, in Niagara River just below Buffalo, and at break of day the Americans abandoned her, after securing the prisoners. About 10 A. M. a company of British regulars pulled down to the island with the intention of destroying the military stores with which she was laden,

but were driven back by a party of Americans, who, after securing a large portion of the cargo, fired the prize and then escaped to the mainland. The *Detroit* mounted six long 9-pounders and had a crew of sixty men, while the *Caledonia* carried two guns and twelve men, and had a cargo of fur valued at one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Fifty prisoners were taken and about forty men of General Hull's army were recaptured. The American loss was one killed and four wounded, among the latter being Master's Mate Cummings.[1] The enemy's loss is not definitely known, but was considerably heavier than that of the Americans. For this handsome affair Congress presented Lieutenant Elliott with a sword, and in July, 1813, he was promoted to the rank of master-commandant.

On the 28th of November a party of eighty-two seamen from the 28-gun corvette *John Adams* (which had been laid up in New York), under Sailing-Master Samuel Angus, with a detachment of one hundred and fifty soldiers under Captain King, made an attack on the British batteries on Niagara River. After a gallant assault the English were put to flight, their guns spiked and thrown into the river, some barracks were burned and their commander was made prisoner; but owing to the confusion of the moment a number of the Americans were left behind, the main body having returned in the boats. After some search two boats were found in which most of the remaining Americans escaped, but Captain King and a few soldiers were taken prisoners. The American loss was about twenty killed or wounded, while that of the enemy must have been much heavier. Sailing-Master Angus was desperately wounded on the head by a blow from the butt of a musket, Sailing-Masters Alexander Sisson and Thomas Watts were mortally wounded, Sailing-Master John K. Carter and Midshipman Joseph Wragg

[1] Official report of Lieutenant Elliott.

were wounded, while Midshipman John Hodges Graham, afterward commodore, lost a leg. Midshipman Holdup-Stevens, afterward captain, was shot through the leg, and Midshipman William Mervine, afterward captain, received a musket ball in his side.

On the 8th of November, a cold, raw, blustering day, such as only the dwellers on the Great Lakes have experienced, Captain Chauncey appeared on Lake Ontario with his squadron, wearing his broad pennant on the 16-gun brig *Oneida*, Lieutenant Woolsey. The other vessels of the squadron were the 3-gun schooner *Conquest*, Lieutenant Elliott; the 9-gun schooner *Hamilton*, Lieutenant Macpherson; the 6-gun schooner *Governor Tompkins*, Midshipman Brown; the 3-gun schooner *Pert*, Sailing-Master Robert Arundel; the 2-gun schooner *Julia*, Sailing-Master James Trant; and the 2-gun schooner *Growler*, Sailing-Master Elijah Mix. On the 9th of November the *Royal George* was discovered off False Ducks, and on being chased ran into Kingston. At three o'clock on the following day Captain Chauncey made an attack on the batteries of this place for the double purpose of reconnoitering and destroying the *Royal George*. Lieutenant Elliott, in the *Conquest*, led the advance, closely followed by the *Julia*, the *Pert*, the *Growler* and the *Oneida*. The *Oneida*, in spite of a hot fire, would have brought the *Royal George* into close action had not the latter fled from her anchorage and moored alongside the wharf, where troops from the fort assembled in such numbers that it was impossible to board her. The *Governor Tompkins* and the *Hamilton* also engaged in gallant style, but finding that it was impossible to capture the *Royal George* the Americans beat out of the harbor. In this spirited affair the *Oneida* lost one man killed and three wounded, while Sailing-Master Arundel, although severely wounded by the bursting of one of the *Pert's* guns, refused to leave the deck; afterward he was knocked overboard and drowned.

Next day the *Governor Tompkins*, the *Hamilton* and the *Julia* chased the *Simcoe*, but she escaped over the reefs, although Lieutenant Macpherson followed her into nine feet of water. The *Simcoe* was so riddled with shot that she sank before reaching Kingston. On returning to port the American squadron captured several vessels, in one of which was Captain Brock, a brother of General Brock. Shortly after this the *Oneida* offered battle to the *Royal George* and two schooners, but the latter fled on the approach of the American ship. The *Conquest*, the *Governor Tompkins*, the *Growler* and the *Hamilton* continued to cruise off Kingston until the 17th of November, but two days later the *Growler* was dismasted in a gale. Soon after this ice began to form in the lake and closed navigation until the following spring.

During the winter of 1812–'13 both Governments made great efforts to construct a naval force that would control these lakes, and on the 26th of November, 1812, the Americans launched the 24-gun ship *Madison*. By the spring of 1813 the British force on Lake Ontario consisted of the 24-gun ship *General Wolfe*, the 22-gun ship *Royal George*, the 16-gun schooner *Prince Regent*, the 14-gun ship *Earl of Moira*, the 14-gun brig *Melville*, the 14-gun schooner *Duke of Gloucester*, the 12-gun schooner *Simcoe*, the 12-gun schooner *Sidney Smith*, the 8-gun schooner *Beresford*, the 4-gun schooner *Seneca*—in all ten vessels—besides gunboats mounting one hundred and forty guns. The rig of several of these vessels had been changed from ship rig to schooner rig.

On the 25th of April Captain Isaac Chauncey sailed from Sackett's Harbor with seventeen hundred troops under Brigadier-General Zebulon Montgomery Pike for an attack on York, now Toronto, and two days later arrived off that place. The American squadron consisted of the 24-gun ship *Madison* (flagship), Lieutenant Jesse D. Elliott; the 16-gun brig *Oneida*, Lieutenant

Melancthon Taylor Woolsey; the 2-gun schooner *Fair American*, Lieutenant Wolcott Chauncey; the 9-gun schooner *Hamilton*, Lieutenant Joseph S. Macpherson; the 6-gun schooner *Governor Tompkins*, Midshipman Brown; the 3-gun schooner *Conquest*, Sailing-Master Mallaby; the 2-gun schooner *Asp*, Sailing-Master Smith; the 3-gun schooner *Pert*, Sailing-Master Adams; the 2-gun schooner *Julia*, Sailing-Master James Trant; the 10-gun schooner *Scourge*, Sailing-Master Osgood; the 2-gun schooner *Growler*, Sailing-Master Elijah Mix; the 3-gun schooner *Lady of the Lake*, Sailing-Master Flinn; the 2-gun schooner *Ontario*, Sailing-Master Joseph Stevens; and the transport *Raven*—in all fourteen vessels, mounting eighty-four guns. The landing was effected with great steadiness, although forty soldiers and fourteen seamen were killed or wounded.[1] The smaller vessels then ran in, and, taking positions within six hundred yards of the batteries, opened an effective fire. The forts and the town were carried in gallant style, but by an explosion in the magazine the Americans suffered a heavy loss, among the killed being General Pike. Of the naval force four were killed, including Midshipmen John Hatfield and Thompson, and ten were wounded. Burning a large vessel on the stocks and capturing the 14-gun schooner *Duke of Gloucester* and a large amount of naval and military stores, Captain Chauncey returned to Sackett's Harbor in triumph. Among the trophies carried off by the Americans was a royal standard of the United Kingdom, probably the first ever taken from the English. It is preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

On the 6th of May the British troop-ship *Woolwich* arrived at Quebec from Spithead, with Captain Sir James Lucas Yeo, four commanders of the navy, twenty-four midshipmen and about four hundred and fifty

[1] Official report of Captain Chauncey.

picked seamen, "sent out by the British Government expressly for service in the Canadian lakes." Captain Yeo commanded the *Southampton* when that frigate and her prize, the *Vixen*, were wrecked on Concepcion Island, of the Bahama group. Such was the zeal of the officers and men to get to the scene of action that they departed the same evening for Montreal.

Having stationed the *Fair American* and the *Pert* off Kingston to watch the enemy, Captain Chauncey sailed with the remainder of his squadron for Fort George. Approaching Niagara River on the 26th of May, the Americans sounded along the shore and laid buoys for the guidance of their vessels during the attack. On the same day Master-Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry came down from Lake Erie and was assigned to the difficult task of debarking the troops. At 3 A. M. on the 27th the *Governor Tompkins*, Midshipman Brown, and the *Conquest*, Midshipman Thomas Petigru, drew up to the batteries and opened such an effective fire that the enemy was soon fleeing in all directions. The boats under Master-Commandant Perry and Colonel Winfield Scott then pulled from the cover of the schooner and made a dash for the landing. Just then a detachment of soldiers, which had been concealed in a ravine, opened fire with great effect on the crowded boats, but nothing could check the impetuosity of the men, and the two divisions vied with each other to be first at the landing. The boats under Colonel Scott arrived first, and the men, unmindful of the storm of bullets that fell among them, scrambled out of their boats, hastily formed a line, and with a cheer drove the enemy from cover into a disorderly retreat. In this spirited affair the American's loss was seventeen killed and forty-five wounded,[1] while that of the enemy is estimated at ninety killed, one hundred and sixty wounded and about one hundred prisoners.

[1] Official report of General Dearborn.

While the American squadron was thus engaged at the southern end of the lake, Sir George Prevost, taking advantage of the unprotected condition of Sackett's Harbor, determined to attack that place and destroy all the stores there collected. According to the English account of this affair, "Sir George Prevost now allowed himself to be persuaded to embark seven hundred and fifty troops on board the squadron for the purpose of making an attack upon Sackett's Harbor; but to mar the successful issue of the plan he resolved to head the troops himself. On the 27th of May, when an excellent opportunity was afforded by the absence of the American squadron at the opposite end of the lake, the British squadron, in high glee, sailed from Kingston, and with a fair wind stood across to the enemy's depot. At noon the squadron arrived off Sackett's Harbor and lay to, with everything in readiness for the troops to disembark. Sir George hesitated, looked at the place, mistook trees for troops and blockhouses for batteries, and ordered the expedition to put back. Just as the ships had turned their heads toward Kingston, and, with the wind now changed, were beginning to sail before it, about fifty Indians brought off a party of American soldiers from the shore near Sackett's Harbor. Encouraged by this, Sir George permitted the squadron to begin working its way back to the American port. On the morning of the 29th some of the lighter vessels got close to the shore, and the troops were landed. They drove the Americans like sheep, compelled them to set fire to the *General Pike*, a new frigate on the stocks, the *Duke of Gloucester*, captured at York, and a barrack containing, among other valuable articles, all the naval stores taken on the same occasion. At this moment some resistance unexpectedly made at a barrack caused the British commander in chief to sound a retreat. The indignant, the victorious officers and men were compelled to obey the fatal bugle, and the British retired to their vessels, and the

Americans, as soon as they could credit their senses, hastened to stop the conflagration. The *General Pike*, being built of green wood, was saved, but the *Duke of Gloucester* and the barracks containing the stores were entirely consumed. That Sir George Prevost was as fond of writing official letters as he was of substituting the first personal pronoun for the third, has already appeared in these pages; but in the present instance, contrary to all precedents, he required his adjutant, Colonel Edward Baynes, to pen the dispatch. That obedient gentleman did so, and the European public scarcely know at this hour through whose fault it was that Sackett's Harbor was not taken from the Americans in May, 1813. The Canadian public, besides being in the secret, were less surprised at the result of the enterprise, because they knew that Sir George, a few months before, had rejected an excellent opportunity of marching across the ice to Sackett's Harbor and destroying the whole American lake navy at a blow." The American force stationed at Sackett's Harbor at the time of Sir George Prevost's attack consisted of four hundred regulars under General Jacob Brown, besides some militia. Their loss was one hundred and fifty killed or wounded, while that of the enemy is given at fifty-two killed and two hundred and eleven wounded.[2]

On the 14th of June the *Lady of the Lake*, Lieutenant Wolcott Chauncey, left Sackett's Harbor to intercept British supply ships, and on the 16th she chased and overhauled the schooner *Lady Murray*, laden with provisions and ammunition. She then returned to Sackett's Harbor with her prize and twenty-one prisoners, among whom were Ensign George Charles Merce and several noncommissioned officers of the Forty-first and One Hundred and Fourth Regiments.

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[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 104.

[2] Military Occurrences between Great Britain and the United States, p. 173.

In the latter part of July Captain Chauncey sailed with his squadron for Niagara, arriving at that port on the 27th. This force consisted of thirteen vessels, carrying one hundred and nine guns; only three of these vessels, however, were adapted for war purposes; the schooners could not be fought within canister distance, their bulwarks being so low as to afford no protection to their crews. Besides this, they were so light that their guns could be used only in smooth water.

On the morning of the 7th of August the British squadron was discovered coming down the lake, and, notwithstanding the advantage the enemy had in a compact force and superior metal, Captain Chauncey determined on a general engagement. Captain Yeo's squadron consisted of six vessels, mounting ninety-four guns. About 9 A. M. the *General Pike* hoisted her colors and fired several guns at the *General Wolfe*, but the shot fell short, upon which the American squadron hauled up to the wind and went on the other tack. The British ships imitated the manœuvre, but finding that the *General Pike* would weather him, Sir James Yeo drew away to the north. The American vessels made sail in chase, but as the wind was failing Captain Chauncey gave the signal of recall. That night the wind came on in violent squalls, and the American crews were constantly on duty endeavoring to weather the enemy. When morning broke it was discovered that the 9-gun schooner *Hamilton*, Lieutenant Walter Winter, and the 10-gun schooner *Scourge*, Sailing-Master Joseph Osgood, had been capsized and only sixteen men were saved. By this disaster Captain Chauncey's force was reduced to eleven vessels and ninety guns. The *Hamilton* and the *Scourge* were the most valuable schooners in the squadron, the others being so light, and such indifferent sailers, as to impede the movements of the larger vessels.

Early on the following morning the enemy was seen coming down to engage, but when about three miles

distant they hauled about and stood away on the other tack. The American vessels then hauled off from the shore, hoping that the land breeze in the afternoon would enable them to close, but in the afternoon it fell calm, whereupon the Americans resorted to their sweeps. The light schooners soon drew ahead of the larger craft and were nearly in range of the enemy, when a fresh westerly breeze gave Captain Yeo the weather gage and placed the schooners in a critical position, for their support was some distance astern. Seeing their advantage, the British crowded all sail to close on the schooners before the *General Pike*, the *Madison* and the *Oneida* could come to the rescue; but by a free use of their sweeps and sails the schooners regained their position in the line, upon which Captain Yeo hauled off. It was evident that Sir James, notwithstanding his superior force, was unwilling to risk a general engagement without the additional advantage of the weather gage, and this Captain Chauncey very properly refused to concede. The overcautiousness of Sir James in this affair is the more inexplicable when we remember the great anxiety he expressed at the beginning of the war to meet an enemy. Early in September, 1812, this officer, then in command of the 32-gun frigate *Southampton*, sent the following challenge to Captain David Porter, of the 32-gun frigate *Essex:* "Sir James Yeo presents his compliments to Captain Porter, of the American frigate *Essex*, and would be glad to have a *tête-à-tête;* anywhere between the Capes of Delaware and Havana, where he would have the pleasure to break his sword over his damned head and put him down forward in irons." Sir James did not have the "pleasure" of meeting the *Essex*, but he had ample opportunity of engaging an American squadron of inferior force commanded by Captain Chauncey.

Seeing that the British commander would not engage that day, Captain Chauncey anchored in Niagara

River for the night. During the next day the opposing squadrons manœuvred without coming to action, both commanders being unwilling to close unless favored with the weather gage, but on the following night the Americans worked up the north shore, and by daylight of the 10th found themselves to windward. A general chase was now signaled, and with every prospect of bringing on an engagement the squadron bore down under press of sail; but at noon, when they were nearly within gunshot, the wind shifted around in favor of the enemy. Captain Chauncey then manœuvred to secure the weather gage again, but his vessels were so impeded by their inequality in sailing that he was unsuccessful. At 6 P. M., when the British were about four miles distant, the fickle lake wind again changed, placing the Americans to windward; but it was 10 P. M. before the squadrons were near enough to render an action probable, and at this moment the breeze again veered, placing the Americans to leeward. By 11 P. M. the heavier vessels opened fire, but they were out of range, and at 11.45 P. M. the American schooners, being in the advance, ran to leeward so as to come under the protection of the ships. The *Growler*, Lieutenant Deacon, and the *Julia*, Sailing-Master James Trant, however, contrary to the intention of Captain Chauncey, hauled close to the wind to weather the enemy, and the excessive zeal of their commanders put the British squadron between them and the other American vessels. Sir James immediately went about with all his vessels to capture the *Growler* and *Julia*, while the *General Pike*, the *Madison* and the *Oneida*, with the schooner straggling in the rear, hauled up in chase, hoping to draw the enemy from the fugitive schooners. Sir James, after exchanging a few shot with the *General Pike*, continued in pursuit of the *Growler* and the *Julia*, and after a long chase captured them. The *General Pike*, the *Madison* and the *Oneida* maintained the chase for some time, but

finding that they were drawing away from their support, stood about and returned to port. Contented with this success, Captain Yeo sailed for Kingston, while the American squadron shortly afterward put back to Sackett's Harbor.

After this week of indecisive skirmishing the two squadrons did not sight each other again until the 28th of September, when they met off Toronto. After some manœuvring, the *General Pike*, the *Governor Tompkins*, Lieutenant W. C. B. Finch, and the *Asp*, got within range and opened a sharp fire, which soon carried away the *General Wolfe's* main and mizzen topmast and her main yard, when she put dead before the wind to escape. After an ineffectual pursuit the Americans hauled off and returned to port. The *General Pike's* loss in killed or wounded was twenty-seven, but of these twenty-two were killed or wounded by the bursting of one of her guns. Four of her other guns also were cracked. Her main topgallant mast was carried away and her hull was wounded. The *Madison* was slightly injured, while the *Oneida* had her main topmast shattered and the *Governor Tompkins* lost her foremast. Before the season closed the British squadron was chased several times, but no action took place. On the afternoon of October 5th Captain Chauncey, while cruising near False Ducks, discovered seven sails to windward, which, on being overtaken, proved to be British gunboats with troops aboard. Five of these were captured, one was burned and the other, the *Enterprise*, escaped. Two of the prizes were the *Growler* and the *Julia*, lately captured by Captain Yeo. Nearly three hundred British soldiers were secured, and about two hundred American prisoners were released.[1] For the remainder of the year Captain Yeo was blockaded in Kingston. On the 10th of November he ventured out, but on sighting the American squadron re-

[1] Captain Chauncey's official report.

gained the shelter of the batteries, and by the first of December navigation on the lake had closed.

Captain Perry's victory on Lake Erie, which will be narrated in the next chapter, enabled the Americans to re-enforce their squadron on the upper lake, and the winter of 1813–'14 was taken up with building war vessels, so that by the summer Captain Chauncey's force consisted of the 58-gun frigate *Superior* (flagship), Lieutenant John H. Elton; the 42-gun frigate *Mohawk*, Captain Jones; the 28-gun ship *General Pike*, Master-Commandant William Montgomery Crane; the 24-gun ship *Madison*, Master-Commandant Edward Trenchard; the 22-gun brig *Jefferson*, Master-Commandant Charles Goodwin Ridgeley; the 22-gun brig *Jones*, Master-Commandant Melancthon Taylor Woolsey; the 16-gun brig *Sylph*, Master-Commandant Elliott; the 16-gun brig *Oneida*, Lieutenant Thomas Brown; making a total of eight vessels, mounting two hundred and twenty-eight guns. Captain Yeo's squadron also had been strengthened until it comprised the 58-gun frigate *Prince Regent* (flagship), Captain O'Conner; the 42-gun frigate *Princess Charlotte*, Captain Mulcaster; the 24-gun ship *Montreal* (*Wolfe*), Captain Downie; the 22-gun ship *Niagara* (*Royal George*), Captain Popham; the 16-gun ship *Charwell* (*Earl of Moira*), Lieutenant Dobbs; the 16-gun brig *Netley* (*Beresford*), Lieutenant Owens; the 16-gun brig *Star* (*Melville*), Captain Clover; the 14-gun brig *Magnet* (*Sidney Smith*); a total of eight vessels, mounting two hundred and eight guns.

Early in May, before Captain Chauncey could get to sea, the British squadron, commanded by Sir James Yeo, manned by fifteen hundred men and carrying one thousand soldiers, appeared before Oswego. This place was then a village of about five hundred inhabitants, defended by rude earthworks, garrisoned with two hundred and ninety regulars and some militia under Lieutenant-Colonel Mitchell. The entire American

force numbered fewer than four hundred men, while there were only three or four heavy guns that could be used. The enemy landed on the 6th of May, under Lieutenant-General Drummond, and carried the place by assault. The American loss was six killed, thirty-eight wounded and twenty-five reported missing; total, sixty-nine. The British admit a loss of eighteen killed and sixty-four wounded. The transport *Growler* was sunk, to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy. After spiking the four guns of the batteries and destroying a considerable quantity of stores, the enemy raised the *Growler* and retired to Kingston with that vessel as a prize.

On the 19th of May Captain Yeo appeared before Sackett's Harbor and prevented supplies, guns, rigging etc., for the American vessels from getting in, and this for a time gave the British undisturbed possession of the lake. But valuable re-enforcements were arriving at Sackett's Harbor. Between the 11th and 21st of May the crew of the *Macedonian*—which frigate had been laid up in the Thames—arrived under the command of her first lieutenant, Mr. Rodgers. On the 12th, Master-Commandant Jesse D. Elliott rejoined the station, and on the 15th Master-Commandant Trenchard arrived. The crew of the new sloop of war *Erie*, which was blockaded at Baltimore, also arrived under Master-Commandant Charles G. Ridgeley, and was ordered to the *Jefferson*.

Captain Chauncey was greatly delayed in getting to sea by the nonarrival of guns and rigging for his new cruisers, especially for the *Superior*. Many of his stores were at Oswego Falls, about twelve miles above Oswego, but as the roads were impassable and the enemy controlled the lake, the task of forwarding these supplies to Sackett's Harbor was attended with great difficulty and danger. As the Americans could not get to sea without them, Master-Commandant Melancthon T. Woolsey volunteered to bring them to

Sackett's Harbor. On the evening of May 28th this officer sailed out of Oswego Harbor with nineteen boats laden with twenty-two long 32-pounders, ten long 24-pounders, three short 42-pounders, and twelve cables, escorted by Major Appling with one hundred and thirty riflemen. By rowing hard all night the party reached Big Sandy Creek by the following noon with the exception of one boat, which was lost in the fog at dawn and was captured by the enemy, who were maintaining a sharp lookout. From the men in this captured boat Sir James Yeo learned where the American flotilla was, and he immediately dispatched three gunboats with three cutters and a gig under the command of Captain Popham and Captain Spilsbury in chase. The Americans, being warned of the pursuit by a resident named James Otis, ran about three miles up Sandy Creek, where they landed and arranged a skillful ambuscade. The enemy came up the creek, confident of an easy capture, but, falling into the snare set for them, they were captured with all their boats. Their loss was Midshipman Hoare and fourteen seamen and marines killed, and two lieutenants of marines and twenty-six wounded, which with the prisoners made a total loss to the enemy of one hundred and eighty-six, or as many as the entire American force. The American loss was one man wounded. The stores were then landed from the flotilla and carried overland to Sackett's Harbor, fifteen miles distant. The great cable for the *Superior* was twenty-two inches in circumference and weighed nine thousand six hundred pounds. As there was no vehicle strong enough to carry this cable, it was taken on the shoulders of two hundred men and carried to Sackett's Harbor.

On the 6th of June the blockade was raised, but it was more than six weeks later when Captain Chauncey got to sea, and in the mean time the enemy had been hastening the completion of a 100-gun ship.

On the 19th of June Acting Lieutenant Francis H. Gregory, afterward rear-admiral, was dispatched to the St. Lawrence with two gigs, with orders to cut out, if possible, some of the English supply boats. He was discovered in this attempt by the enemy, who sent the gunboat *Black Snake*, carrying an 18-pound carronade and eighteen men, against him. But instead of retreating, Mr. Gregory made a dash at the gunboat and captured her. Being chased by a larger boat, he was compelled to sink his prize, and he then returned to port with almost as many prisoners as seamen. He was ably assisted in this spirited affair by Sailing-Master William Vaughan and Mr. Dixon, who were familiar with lake navigation. Before the close of the month Mr. Gregory, again accompanied by Vaughan and Dixon, with two gigs, landed at Erie and destroyed a cruiser designed to carry fourteen guns, which the enemy was building there. For these handsome affairs Mr. Gregory received a commission as lieutenant.

On the 31st of July the American squadron, increased by the 62-gun frigate *Superior* and the 42-gun ship *Mohawk*, took to the lake, and after capturing the *Magnet* blockaded Captain Yeo in Kingston forty-five days. On the night of August 12th the schooners *Ohio* and *Somers* in Lake Erie were captured by a party of seventy-five British seamen, in nine boats under the command of Captain Dobbs. The *Porcupine* also was attacked, but she beat off her assailants. In this affair the Americans lost one killed, and seven men, including three officers, wounded. On the 25th of August, while reconnoitering Kingston harbor in a gig, Mr. Gregory was chased by two of the enemy's barges and captured. Midshipman Hart was killed and five of the men wounded. Although on several occasions it was expected that the British squadron would advance to give battle, nothing of importance occurred. An attempt made on the 19th of November, by Midshipman M'Gowan and William Johnson, to blow up the new

112-gun ship *St. Lawrence* was unsuccessful, and by the end of November ice had closed navigation.

In the summer of 1814 the American naval force stationed on Lake Huron, under the command of Captain Arthur Sinclair, captured the British schooners *Mink* and *Nancy*, laden with flour and stores. The *Perseverance* was captured by the same force soon afterward on Lake Superior, but was lost while passing down the Falls of St. Mary. Having destroyed the enemy's shipping on the upper lakes, Captain Sinclair returned to Lake Erie in August, leaving the schooners *Scorpion*, Lieutenant Champlin, and *Tigress*, Lieutenant Turner, on guard. On the night of September 3d the *Tigress* was attacked by British barges under the command of Lieutenant Bugler and carried by surprise. Two days later the *Scorpion*, not having heard of the *Tigress*' fate, and seeing the American colors on her, ran alongside and was captured. In his official report Lieutenant Bugler said: "The defense of the *Tigress* did credit to her officers, who were all severely wounded." Lieutenant Champlin's thigh bone was shattered by a canister shot.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF LAKE ERIE.

At the beginning of the War of 1812 Master-Commandant Oliver Hazard Perry, then in his twenty-sixth year, and recently promoted from the rank of lieutenant, was in charge of the gunboats at Newport. He had seen active service in the wars with France and Tripoli, and at the outbreak of hostilities with England he requested the Navy Department to send him "where he could meet the enemies of his country." On the 17th of February, 1813, he received orders to select such officers and men from his gunboat flotilla as were adapted for service on the Great Lakes and to report to Captain Isaac Chauncey at Sackett's Harbor. On the day he received this order Master-Commandant Perry dispatched Sailing-Master Thomas C. Almy with fifty men for Lake Ontario, and two days later fifty more under Sailing-Master Stephen Champlin, while on the 21st a third detachment of fifty men under Sailing-Master William Vigneron Taylor set out from Providence on a "land cruise" over mountains and hills and through trackless forests.

On the 22d of February Master-Commandant Perry left his pleasant home in Washington Square, Newport, and, taking an affectionate leave of his young wife, started with his thirteen-year-old brother James Alexander in a heavy rainstorm for the frozen north—in quest of glory. After stopping a day at Lebanon, Conn., to visit his parents, he hastened northward, and on the 28th of February met Captain Chauncey at Albany. In the severest part of the winter of 1812–'13

these two officers turned their backs on the borders of civilization and plunged into the wilderness. Making their way along the waters of Mohawk River, now traveling in rude sleighs over corduroy roads, now in canoes gliding swiftly along turbulent streams, and at other times breaking through the dense underbrush on foot, they hastened westward. Nothing relieved the loneliness of their journey save the distant howl of wild beasts or the occasional whir of birds, startled by the unwonted sight of man. The only indications of human life were fleeting glimpses of savages as they hovered around the trail with plunder and murder depicted on their scowling visages, or some settler who met them with keen, suspicious glances, as if fearful of hidden danger or treachery. From Lake Oneida the young adventurers followed the trail down Oswego River to its mouth, and then skirted along the bleak shores of Lake Ontario in a boat toward Sackett's Harbor.

If there was little sign of life in their journey from Albany to the lake, there was even less on that dreary waste of waters. The dull, leaden sky of a wintry day hung over them like a pall. To seaward nothing met their gaze but an unbroken stretch of short, choppy seas, whipped into petulant whitecaps by the piercing northwest wind; on the other side sullen forests came down to the water's edge, their somber hue intensified by the yellow and dull white line formed by the clay banks and sandy shore. Now and then a bird rising out of the woodlands and winging its flight over the lake, where it circled in monotonous gradations, enhanced the loneliness of the situation. To afford a relief for the depressing sensation, a musket was fired occasionally or a shout raised, only to be mockingly returned from the gloomy forests while the echoing reverberations rolled along the shores, growing more and more indistinct, until lost in the distance—again leaving the travelers overwhelmed by the silence of a primeval solitude. To

add to their discomforts, a cold rain began to fall, so that by the time they arrived at Sackett's Harbor, on the evening of a dismal day early in March, they were soaked to the skin. The reception they met by the people of this place was even more chilly, if possible, than the weather they had experienced. The principal business of the townsfolk was smuggling, and the arrival of United States officials was looked upon with suspicion and displeasure.

And this was the "scene of glory" for which young Perry had left his home in far-off Newport! It is easy to dream of fame while snugly ensconced in a stanch frigate, bowling along the ocean under easy canvas, with a loyal crew, a complete armament, a dry magazine and a well-stored hold, but the scrawny pines and the stubborn oaks that grew on the shore of Lake Ontario were far from being the "stanch frigate" of the middy's dream, while the little company of half-frozen, plague-stricken men who huddled around the fires in the wretched hamlet of Sackett's Harbor was not the kind of a crew on which a naval commander would ordinarily care to risk his life and professional honor.

By the capture of the vast tract of land then known as the Territory of Michigan, but now comprising a number of States, the English obtained undisputed control of Lake Erie, and were in a position to carry out their plans of extending the Dominion of Canada along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers down to the Gulf, so as to cut off the United States from the West. To young Perry was assigned the herculean task of regaining control of Lake Erie, which was the first step necessary to the recovery of the lost ground. At the time of his arrival at Sackett's Harbor it was expected that the English would make an attack on that place, so Perry remained there two weeks to assist in its defense. The attack was postponed, however, and on the 16th of March he set out for Lake Erie. On the 24th he arrived at Buffalo, and from that place he made his way in a

sleigh over the ice to Erie, then known as Presque Isle, an insignificant hamlet of a few log houses and a tavern, at one time a trading-post established by the French in 1749 as one of their chain of forts which was to unite the Canadas with Louisiana. Perry arrived at this place on the 27th of March and established his headquarters at Duncan's Erie Hotel. Sailing-Master Daniel Dobbins, who had been in charge of the Ameri-



Lake Erie.

can naval affairs on this lake, had, with the assistance of Noah Brown, a shipwright from New York, already laid down several vessels which were now nearly completed. Two brigs, the *Niagara* and the *Lawrence*, which were being constructed at the mouth of Cascade Creek, had been built with white and black oak and chestnut frames, the outside planking being of oak, while the decks were of pine. Many trees found their places in these vessels on the same day they were felled in the forest. The brigs were one hundred and ten feet over all, and had twenty-nine feet beam. The *Lawrence* was so named by order of the Secretary of the Navy, who, on receiving the news of the capture of the *Chesapeake* by the *Shannon*, June 1, 1813, ordered that one of the brigs be named after the *Chesapeake's* com-

mander. Two gunboats, nearly planked up, were at the mouth of Lee's Run between the present Beech and Sassafras Streets of Erie, while work on a schooner called the *Scorpion* was just begun.

On his way from Buffalo to Erie Perry stopped at a lonely cabin on the shores of Lake Erie, and from its keeper, who had lately returned from the Canadian side, learned that the enemy was fully informed of the progress made on the American vessels, and was preparing to attack Erie. To meet this danger the shipwrights, when not engaged at their vocation, were drilled under the command of Sailing-Master Dobbins and were formed into a guard, while an additional company of sixty volunteers was raised by a Mr. Foster. By the time the brigs were ready for launching the Americans found that they were destitute of rigging, sails, armaments and general equipments, and with a view of hastening their arrival Master-Commandant Perry went to Pittsburg. Returning from this tedious journey, he hastened to Buffalo with Sailing-Master Dobbins for men and ammunition. By the capture of Fort George, as narrated in the last chapter, the English were compelled to abandon Fort Erie, which left Niagara River open. This enabled the Americans to re-enforce their squadron at Erie with the following vessels: the brig *Caledonia*, the schooners *Somers*, *Tigress* and *Ohio*, and the sloop *Trippe*, which had been detained below Buffalo by the Canadian batteries. By the united efforts of two hundred soldiers and many yoke of oxen these vessels were warped up the swift current, the task requiring six days. As they rode out on the lake a resident of the Canadian shore put off in a boat and informed Perry that the English had dispatched a powerful squadron under Captain Finnis to intercept him. All haste was made to get the vessels into Erie, but they were so delayed by head winds that at one time they made only twenty-five miles in twenty-four hours. To make their

position more critical, Perry was seized with the lake fever, but he still insisted on retaining command. After being buffeted about for several days by boisterous winds, in momentary expectation of capture, they finally gained the harbor of Erie only a few hours before the British squadron hove in sight and blockaded the port.

By the 10th of July the American vessels were ready for sea, but there were only officers and sailors enough to man one ship, and many of these men were on the sick list. In the meantime the British squadron maintained a rigorous blockade, and Perry was compelled to see the English colors flaunted before his eyes every day, while he was powerless to act. He wrote repeatedly to General Harrison, to Captain Chauncey and to the Secretary of the Navy. "Give me men, sir, and I will acquire both for you and myself honor and glory on this lake or perish in the attempt," was his plea. On the 23d of July he wrote to Captain Chauncey: "For God's sake and your own and mine, send me men and officers, and I will have the enemy in a day or two." But his prayer was almost in vain, for only a few men could be sent to him, and they were of an inferior class — "a motley set, blacks, soldiers and boys." Rumors that the enemy had planned a land and water expedition against Erie with a view of destroying the American squadron before it could get to sea again reached Erie, and many of the people became panic-struck and fled to the interior. With what men he had Master-Commandant Perry made the best possible disposition for defense by throwing up breastworks and batteries, but fortunately the English were delayed in massing their troops at Long Point, and did not carry out their plans.

By the close of July Perry had three hundred men with whom to man his ten vessels, and even with this inferior force he determined to get to sea at the first opportunity. But now a new difficulty confronted

him. The water in the lake had gradually been falling, until now it was impossible to get the brigs over the bar without landing their guns and blocking the vessels up on scows. To attempt this in the face of a powerful blockading squadron was worse than folly, and again Perry was compelled to remain an inactive spectator. Commander Robert Heriot Barclay, who had succeeded Captain Finnis in the command of the British squadron, was fully aware of his advantage, and remained off the harbor, determined to prevent the Americans from getting to sea; and as a further precaution, he sent spies into Erie to inform him of any attempt that might be made to get the vessels over the bar under cover of night. As the Americans did not seem to be ready for sea, Commander Barclay, on the 2d of August, made sail for the Canadian side of the lake, in order, it is said, to accept an invitation to dinner from the inhabitants of Port Dover. Master-Commandant Perry seized the opportunity, and on August 4th, without any appearance of preparation, he dropped down to the bar with his ships. The guns of the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* were quickly landed on the beach, two large scows were brought alongside and sunk nearly to the level of the water, so that the ends of massive pieces of timber, which had been run through the after and forward ports, passed over them. Plugs were then put in and the water pumped out of the scows, and, gradually rising, they lifted the brigs higher out of the water until they drew two feet less than before. But even this was not sufficient to enable them to pass over the bar, and it became necessary to block up the timbers and again sink the scows and pump them out. This was done, and before dawn the *Lawrence* and the *Niagara* were safely over the bar, when their guns were replaced and hurried preparations were made to defend them. The task had been accomplished none too soon, for at eight o'clock the following morning the British squadron reappeared,

and after half an hour of reconnoitering and some harmless cannonading it made sail for the upper end of the lake.

After equipping their vessels the Americans cruised several days between Erie and the Canadian shore in search of the enemy, but Commander Barclay had put into Malden to await the completion of the 19-gun ship *Detroit*. On the 9th of August Master-Commandant Jesse D. Elliott arrived at Erie with one hundred men and was assigned to the *Niagara*, and three days later the American squadron put to sea in a double line of battle. On the 13th of August, off Sandusky, a suspicious sail was descried, and the *Scorpion* was sent in chase. The stranger proved to be a British spy boat, and the whole squadron made sail after it, but during the night a storm came on, so that by darting among the islands of Put-in-Bay, the boat escaped. As the wind increased in violence the squadron came to anchor, and during the heavy rain storm on the evening of August 19th General William Henry Harrison and staff, with a number of Indian chiefs, arrived for the purpose of arranging some concerted plan of action between the water and land forces. It was decided to move upon the enemy as soon as the army was ready. In the meantime the squadron sailed for Malden on a reconnoitering expedition, while the *Ohio*, Sailing-Master Daniel Dobbins, was sent to Erie to forward supplies. After looking into Malden, Perry returned to Put-in-Bay on the 27th, with many of his men prostrated by lake fever, and Perry himself with the three medical officers of the squadron was suffering from the malady.

As a large proportion of the crews of the American vessels was made up of soldiers, those who were able to get about were exercised every day in seamanship, as it was intended to make a boat attack on the British vessels in Malden if they failed to come out and give battle on the lake. On the 1st of September the

Americans again sailed for Malden. The appearance of Perry's squadron spread great alarm on shore, and the Indians requested that it be attacked at once, but as Commander Barclay had not completed his arrangements he did not feel justified in giving battle. After remaining off Malden several days, Perry, on the 6th of September, returned to Put-in-Bay. On the night of the 9th he held a council of his officers, at which it was decided to make a boat attack on the British squadron at its anchorage in Malden, and preparations were made to carry out the plan. But before this could be done, Commander Barclay was compelled to put to sea in order to open communications with Long Point, the English base of supplies; and at sunrise on Saturday morning, September 10th, the English ships were descried from the *Lawrence's* masthead, and the Americans hastened to meet them.

At this time Master-Commandant Perry's squadron consisted of the brig *Lawrence* (flagship), Lieutenant John J. Yarnall, mounting two long 12-pounders and eighteen short 32-pounders; the brig *Niagara*, Master-Commandant Jesse D. Elliott, two long 12-pounders and eighteen short 32-pounders; the brig *Caledonia*, Lieutenant Daniel Turner, two long 24-pounders and one short 32-pounder; the schooner *Ariel*, Lieutenant John H. Packett, four long 12-pounders; the schooner *Tigress*, Lieutenant Augustus H. M. Conckling, one long 32-pounder; the sloop *Trippe*, Lieutenant Thomas Holdup, one long 32-pounder; the schooner *Porcupine*, Midshipman George Senate, one long 32-pounder; the schooner *Scorpion*, Sailing-Master Stephen Champlin, one long 32-pounder and one short 24-pounder; the schooner *Somers*, Sailing-Master Thomas C. Almy, one long 24-pounder and one short 32-pounder;[1] in all, nine vessels, mounting fifty-four guns, with fifteen hundred and thirty-six pounds of metal; and deducting seven

[1] Official report of Master-Commandant Perry.

per cent for deficient weight in American metal, we have fourteen hundred and twenty-eight pounds. These vessels were manned by four hundred and ninety men, only one hundred and twenty-five of whom were from the regular navy, a fourth of them were raw recruits, and a fourth were negroes, while one hundred and sixteen during the action were unfit for duty, as they were suffering from cholera morbus and lake fever. Of the one hundred and thirty-seven men and boys in the *Lawrence* only one hundred and three were fit for duty on this occasion.

The British squadron consisted of the ship *Detroit* (flagship), mounting two long 24-pounders, one long 18-pounder, six long 12-pounders, eight long 9-pounders, one short 24-pounder and one short 18-pounder; the ship *Queen Charlotte*, Captain Finnis, one long 12-pounder, two long 9-pounders and fourteen short 24-pounders; the brig *Lady Prevost*, Lieutenant Edward Wise Buchan, one long 9-pounder, two long 6-pounders and ten short 12-pounders; the brig *Hunter*, Lieutenant Bignell, four long 6-pounders, two long 4-pounders, two long 2-pounders and two short 12-pounders; the sloop *Little Belt*, one long 12-pounder and two long 6-pounders; the schooner *Chippewa*, Mr. Campbell, one long 9-pounder; in all, six vessels, mounting sixty-three guns, with a total weight of eight hundred and fifty-two pounds. These vessels were manned by at least five hundred and two men and boys.[1] James has neglected to give satisfactory evidence of the number of men in the English squadron, and as the British official reports are silent on this important detail we must rely on American official documents. One hundred and fifty of these men were from the royal navy, eighty were Canadian sailors, and two hundred and forty of them were soldiers, mostly regulars. Commander Robert Heriot

[1] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 56.

Barclay, the commander of the British squadron, was "a man of no ordinary fame."[1] At this time he was in his thirty-seventh year, and had fought under Nelson at Trafalgar, where he was dangerously wounded, and in another engagement he lost an arm. Lieutenant Buchan, of the *Lady Prevost*, also had distinguished himself under Nelson.

Comparative force.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crews.
American :	54	1,428	490
British :	63	852	502

At ten o'clock in the morning the American vessels got under way and stood out to sea, while hundreds of soldiers and civilians with anxious faces lined the shores to watch the battle. Calling his men aft, Master-Commandant Perry, jumped on a gun slide and gave them a short address, at the close of which he displayed a large blue flag—made by Samuel Hambleton and bearing in white muslin letters about a foot high the immortal words of the dying Lawrence, "Don't give up the ship!"—saying, "My brave lads, this flag bears the last words of Captain Lawrence. Shall I hoist it?" With one voice the men shouted, "Ay, ay, sir!" and as the bunting was run up to the main royal masthead, and, fluttering out, hovered over the ship like the guardian spirit of that departed hero, cheer upon cheer burst from the American squadron, while the army took up the echo with a mighty shout. The men were then sent to quarters, and a profound hush settled over the scene as every one waited the issue with breathless anxiety. Perry now descended into the quiet of his cabin to make his personal arrangements for "what might happen." Gathering his public papers and signal-book together, he tied them in a neat package, shotted it and laid it carefully on the cabin table in

[1] Hughes' History of England, vol. xiv, p. 18.

plain view, ready to be thrown overboard should the ship be captured. Then looking over his wife's letters he tore them up, and after giving a searching glance around the cabin to see that everything was prepared for the worst, he returned to the deck prepared to fight for the best.

The light breeze that wafted the squadron toward the enemy was scarcely sufficient to ruffle the smooth tranquillity of the lake. The English vessels, newly painted, gayly bedecked with flags and under easy sail, throwing their shadows ahead glancing along the sunlit waves, presented a beautiful sight as they came down in line of battle under the cloudless sky. The *Detroit* was especially noticeable for the tautness of her rigging, the dazzling whiteness of her canvas and the handsome style in which she was handled. About half-past ten o'clock a bugle was heard from their flagship, which was followed by a succession of cheers from the different vessels, and at the same time the strains of Rule Britannia from a band in the *Detroit* were carried by the faint breeze to the ears of the Americans. In the *Lawrence* nothing served to break the silence except a few short orders which, followed by the shrill piping of the boatswain's whistle, broke over the waters with startling clearness; then another silence, the more oppressive by the contrast, would follow. The men, divested of all unnecessary clothing, revealing brawny arms and weather-beaten chests, stood by the guns, their set faces and quiet demeanor plainly showing the seriousness of the conflict.

The bearing of Perry at this moment is said to have inspired confidence in all who saw him. The youthful commander, closely watching the approaching enemy, gave the few necessary orders in a calm, firm voice which filled all around him with an intense earnestness and a determination to conquer or die. He was fully conscious of the responsibility resting upon him. The possession of the Great West was at stake. Whether

it was to pass into the hands of Great Britain or of the United States would be largely determined by this battle. Whether the young master-commandant was to go into history a hero or covered with the ignominy of defeat was to be decided that day. It was indeed "a time to try men's souls." About this time Perry ordered grog and rations to be served, for it was more than likely that at the regular time for the midday mess the squadrons would be engaged. After a hasty meal the men again returned to their quarters. The youthful American commander now passed along the deck and examined each gun to make sure that all was in readiness, and as he approached the several gun crews he had a word of encouragement for each. Observing some of the men from the *Constitution*, he said, "I need not say anything to you. You know how to beat those fellows." Approaching another gun manned by men who had served under him in Rhode Island, he remarked: "Ah! Here are the Newport boys! They will do their duty I warrant."

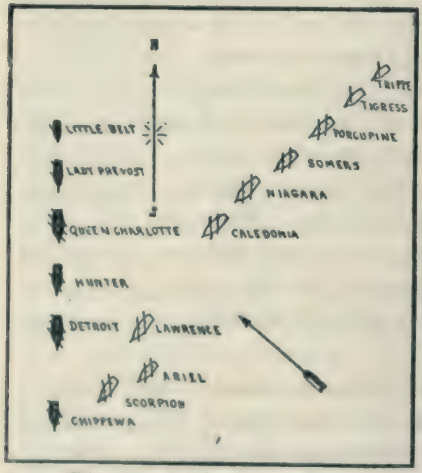


Diagram of the battle, No. 1.

After some manœuvring in the variable wind to gain the weather gage, Perry said to Sailing-Master William Vigneron Taylor, "Run to the lee side of the islands." The sailing-master ventured to reply, "Then you will have to engage the enemy to leeward, sir." "I don't care," answered Perry; "to windward or leeward, they shall fight to-day," and the American vessels passed under the lee of the islands, but a favorable shift in

the wind soon afterward placed them to windward. It was Perry's intention to have the *Niagara* lead the American line of battle, as he supposed that the *Queen Charlotte* would lead the English vessels; but learning from Captain Brevoort, of the army, who was serving in the *Niagara* as a marine officer, and who had recently returned from Canada, the names of the British vessels, and finding that the *Detroit* was at the head of the British line, Perry decided to run the *Lawrence* ahead of the *Niagara*, so that the two flagships might come fairly alongside. At the same time he designated which of the English ships the other vessels of his squadron were to engage.

At 11.45 A. M., while the squadrons were yet a mile apart, the *Detroit* discharged a long 24-pounder at the *Lawrence* by way of testing the distance. The shot ricochetted along the water and passed beyond the American flagship, upon which Perry seized a trumpet and sent the word along his line for the vessels to close up and take their prescribed positions, which were, "to keep within half a cable's length of each other, and enjoining it upon the commanders to preserve their stations in the line." Five minutes after this the *Detroit* fired a second 24-pound shot, and it crashed through the *Lawrence's* starboard bulwarks and sent a cloud of splinters over the men stationed at the batteries. Sailing-Master Champlin, of the *Scorpion*, now trained his long 32-pounder on the *Detroit*, firing the first American shot of the battle, and soon afterward Lieutenant John H. Packett, of the *Ariel*, who had been a midshipman in the *Constitution* during her action with the *Java*, fired one of his long 12-pounders. The *Queen Charlotte* then fired her first gun, which was aimed by a Canadian gunner, John Chapman. The shot went through the *Lawrence's* mainmast, while another shot fired from the same gun entered her starboard side at the water line. The *Lawrence* then opened fire on the *Detroit* with her two long 12-pounders, to which the

enemy responded with long 24-, 18- and 12-pounders, their leading ships concentrating their fire on the American flagship. About the same time the *Niagara* opened with her two long 12-pounders, which were handled so rapidly that in a short time nearly all the ammunition for these guns was expended. But the enemy paid very little attention to her, centering his fire on the *Lawrence*.

Finding that he was suffering heavily from the enemy's long guns, Master-Commandant Perry, at 12.15 P. M., made sail to get at close quarters, where he could bring his short guns into play. The rest of the American line followed his example, but the slow-sailing *Caledonia*—a prize brig built for burden rather than speed—being immediately astern the *Lawrence*, compelled the *Niagara* and the vessels in her wake to shorten sail lest they should run ahead of her, for they had received peremptory orders "to preserve their stations in the line." As Perry did not signal a change in these instructions, the *Lawrence*, with only the *Scorpion* and the *Ariel*, forged considerably ahead of the American column and drew upon herself the principal fire of the English vessels. Notwithstanding this, Perry gallantly made for the enemy's flagship, and when about five hundred yards away he backed his topsails and again opened fire, while the *Ariel* and the *Scorpion* engaged the *Chippewa*. In spite of the fact that these schooners were destitute of bulwarks, so that their crews were exposed to the full effect of grape and canister, they were gallantly brought into close action by Lieutenant John H. Packett and Sailing-Master Stephen Champlin, materially assisting the *Lawrence* in her unequal fight. The calm caused by the cannonading now placed the American flagship in a critical position, for the other vessels of the squadron were far from supporting distance.

For an hour Perry fought the *Detroit* and the *Hunter*, and it was not long before the *Queen Charlotte*

devoted all her attention to him, after which the *Lady Prevost*, which was next to the last ship of the British line, also directed her broadsides at the *Lawrence*. The American flagship was now fighting against hopeless odds, for the distance was too great for short guns to be really effective, and it became a battle of long guns. In this the three American vessels in effective gunshot of the British squadron were at a great disadvantage, for there were only seven long guns in the *Lawrence*, *Ariel* and *Scorpion* combined, with an aggregate of only one hundred and four pounds of metal, while among the English vessels that were devoting their attention to the *Lawrence* were thirty-two long guns, throwing three hundred and six pounds of metal, so that a comparison of the forces engaged at this time would result as follows:

Comparative force in effective range.

	Guns.	Lbs.
American:	7	104
British:	32	306

The concentrated fire of almost the entire British squadron soon reduced the American flagship to a wreck. One by one her guns were disabled until only one on her engaged side could be worked. Her condition at the end of an hour of this unequal contest was appalling. Her rigging was badly damaged, "every brace and bowline being shot away,"[1] her spars were shattered beyond description, the sails were torn into shreds that streamed out with every puff of air, while out of her complement of one hundred and three men fit for duty eighty-three had been killed or wounded. Every corner and nook of the brig was occupied by some wounded and dying wretch who had sought the seclusion so that he might spend his last moments somewhat removed from the turmoil of battle; but

[1] Official report of Master-Commandant Perry.

even this poor consolation was denied him, for the ruthless messengers of death quickly found out his hiding-place and crashed through his mangled body. The rain of iron and lead spared neither the young nor the old. Perry's brother James was struck down at his side by a splinter, but the boy fortunately recovered. Seven years later James, while at Valparaiso in the United States man-of-war *Franklin*, was drowned in a heroic attempt to save a seaman in the surf. As the vessels gradually drifted to closer quarters the short guns and small arms became more effective. Two musket-balls passed through Perry's hat and his clothing was torn by splinters. While a captain of one of the gun crews who had served in the *Constitution* was aiming his piece, a 24-pound shot passed through his chest.

Toward the close of the action First-Lieutenant John J. Yarnall, with his face badly lacerated, came to Perry and said: "All the officers of my division are cut down. Can I have others?" Perry detailed several of his aids, but in a few minutes Lieutenant Yarnall, with fresh wounds, again returned and said: "These officers also have been cut down. I need more." Perry replied: "I have no more to give you. You must endeavor to make out by yourself." "All right, sir," was the grim response, and the heroic officer returned to his division and directed every gun with his own hands. He was wounded three times, and three times he left the cockpit in order to return to his post. His second wound was on the scalp, which caused streams of blood to flow over his face, at times completely blinding him.

Midshipman Dulany Forrest, who was in the *Constitution* during her engagement with the *Java*, was stunned by a grapeshot and fell at Perry's feet. Perry raised him up, and when he recovered consciousness asked if he was seriously injured. The midshipman replied, "I am not hurt, sir, but this is my shot," and extracting the grapeshot from his clothing where

it had lodged, he coolly put it in his pocket and walked to his station. About the same time a cannon ball struck First-Lieutenant John Brooks, Jr., of the marines, on the hip, shattering the bones in a horrible manner. He was carried below, but even in his death agony he expressed anxiety for the outcome of the battle, and died just as victory was announced. One heavy shot crashed into the large china closet and smashed everything in it with a deafening clatter. A spaniel which had been locked up there, startled by this noise, added to the tumult of the battle by setting up a dismal howling. Several times the flagship was in danger of blowing up. One shot went through the light room and knocked the snuff of the candle into the magazine, but the gunner extinguished it with his hand. Besides this, two cannon balls passed entirely through the magazine.

The most revolting carnage, however, was in the cockpit. Ordinarily this room was below the water line, and safe from the enemy's shot, but the *Lawrence*, being a shallow craft, had not room for it, so that the wardroom, which was considerably above the water line, was used for this purpose. Many of the men were killed while being carried below, and some were struck by cannon balls while under the surgeon's hand. Midshipman Henry Laub, who had come down to have his shattered arm dressed, was leaning forward to lie down after the operation had been performed and was struck on the side by a 24-pound shot which came through the side of the vessel, and dashed his mutilated body against the opposite side of the room, killing him instantly. A Narragansett Indian named Pohig, who was serving in the *Lawrence* as one of her crew, was killed in the same manner. No fewer than six cannon shot passed through the cockpit, one of them clearing Assistant-Surgeon Usher Parsons' head by only a few inches. Nothing but the pine planks of the deck above separated the cockpit from the dread-

ful turmoil of battle. The groans and shrieks of the wounded and dying, the deep rumblings and reverberations of the gun carriages as they were run in and out of the ports, the awful explosion of cannon, the crash of round shot as it shattered the boats at the davits, stove in the bulwarks or brought heavy spars tumbling to the deck, could be distinctly heard; while the opening seams in the deck allowed the blood to stream on the surgeon's table in little rills. When the battle had raged three quarters of an hour Master-Commandant Perry stepped to the skylight over the wardroom and ordered the surgeon to send up one of his aids to assist in manning the guns. The command was obeyed, but in five minutes another aid was called for, and this was repeated till only the surgeon himself was left in the cockpit. Finally Perry called out, "Can any of the wounded pull a rope?" Two or three mangled men crawled out and lent a feeble hand in training the few remaining guns. But even this help was soon exhausted, so that Perry himself, with the aid of his chaplain and purser, loaded, trained, and fired the last gun in the *Lawrence*.

At half-past two o'clock the *Lawrence*, the *Ariel* and the *Scorpion* had borne the brunt of the battle for two hours and forty-five minutes. About this time a breeze sprang up, and Master-Commandant Elliott of the *Niagara*, observing the desperate condition of the *Lawrence*, and fearing that Perry had been killed, as no signal to change the order of the battle had been given, instructed Lieutenant Turner, of the *Caledonia*, to bear down on the *Hunter*, while he forged ahead to the relief of the *Lawrence*. As the crippled flagship was rapidly drifting out of action, and the *Niagara* was comparatively uninjured, Master-Commandant Perry determined to change his flag to her. "The American commander, seeing that as yet the day was against him, made a noble effort to regain



The battle of Lake Erie.

it."[1] Leaving First-Lieutenant John J. Yarnall in command, with orders to hold out to the last, Perry, with his broad pennant over his arm, got into a boat with his brother James and four seamen. Just as they were shoving off from the side of the brig one of the survivors in the *Lawrence*, Hosea Sargeant, hauled down the blue flag bearing the motto "Don't give up the ship!" rolled it up and tossed it to Perry. A survivor of the action, John Chapman, who was serving as a gunner in the *Queen Charlotte*, describes the passage of Perry's boat from the *Lawrence* to the *Niagara* as follows: "The *Lawrence* being disabled, Perry took advantage of the settling smoke upon the British fleet to go from her to the *Niagara*. We did not see him until he had nearly effected his purpose, but the wind causing the smoke to lift, I saw the boat and aimed a shot at her, and saw the shot strike the boat. I then saw Perry strip off his coat and plug the hole with it, which prevented the boat from filling before it reached the *Niagara*."

Clambering up the side of the *Niagara*, Master-Commandant Perry quickly rehoisted his broad pennant and the flag bearing the words of the dying Lawrence, and after a hurried consultation he sent Master-Commandant Elliott in a boat with orders to bring up the schooners. Pulling along the line, that officer spoke to the vessels and then repaired aboard the *Somers*. Before the squadron could close on the enemy, however, Master-Commandant Perry, with "unspeakable grief," beheld the surrender of the *Lawrence*. But it could not have been otherwise. Everything that a heroic officer could do had been done, every gun on the engaged side was disabled, nearly every man was either killed or wounded, and after a consultation with Midshipman Forrest and Sailing-Master Taylor, Lieutenant Yarnall decided to surrender in

[1] Official report of Commander Barclay.

order to prevent a useless mutilation of the wounded and dying, and the flag was lowered. The English now gave three cheers, for they believed that they had won the battle. As they were unable to take possession of the *Lawrence* she drifted down between the two lines of battle, and was soon out of range and rehoisted her colors.

At forty-five minutes past two the British endeavored to swing around so as to bring fresh broadsides into play, but in so doing their line became broken and entangled. Seeing the *Niagara* coming down to close quarters, Provincial Lieutenant Irvine, on whom the command of the *Queen Charlotte* had devolved, determined to pour a broadside into her and then board, but his plan was frustrated by the sudden failing of the wind, which just before had been fresh. At this moment a shot carried away "a down haul of one of the sails, which left her at the mercy of the wind, which again rose suddenly, and she ran foul of the *Detroit* and became entangled with her."[1] The *Niagara* now gave the signal for "close action," backed her maintopsails, and, running across the bow and stern of the two English ships, raked them fore and aft with her starboard broadside. The effect of this fire at such close quarters was dreadful. The storm of iron swept along the decks of the enemy, tearing ghastly chasms through the crowds of officers and men. Not waiting to repeat this, the *Niagara* continued her

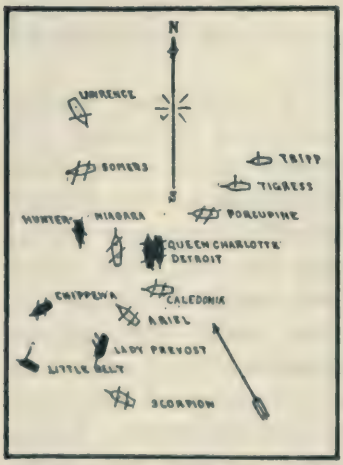


Diagram of the battle, No. 2.

[1] Account of John Chapman.

course, and, running astern of the *Lady Prevost*, delivered another raking fire with her port battery, and then running off she made for the *Hunter*.

The example of the *Niagara* was gallantly imitated by the other vessels of the American squadron. Lieutenant Turner, in the *Caledonia*, closely followed his senior officer, while the *Ariel*, the *Somers*, the *Scorpion*, the *Tigress* and the *Porcupine* darted among the English vessels and for eight minutes kept up a furious cannonading. Asel Wilkinson, who stood at the helm of the *Ariel* all through the battle, had his cartridge box torn from his belt by a cannon shot, while the concussion of the artillery brought blood from his ears and nose. For the first time the entire American squadron was engaged at close quarters. John Chapman said: "The American schooners, coming into close action, raked fore and aft, carrying away all the masts of the *Detroit* and the mizzenmast of the *Queen Charlotte*, besides crippling her severely otherwise. I remained at my gun through the action, except when I was obliged to bring cartridges for the gun after the men were killed whose duty it was to serve them. I had my clothes, whiskers and hair badly singed by the accidental discharge of some loose powder, but suffered no further injury notwithstanding I had a 24-pound cartridge in my hand at the time." At 3 P. M., or fifteen minutes from the time the breeze enabled the Americans to close, an officer appeared on the taffrail of the *Hunter*, waving a white handkerchief at the end of a boarding-pike as a signal of surrender. The *Niagara* immediately ceased firing, while word was passed that the enemy had struck. Two of the English vessels, the *Chippewa* and the *Little Belt*, availing themselves of the smoke and confusion, crowded on all sail to escape, but they were pursued by the *Trippe* and the *Scorpion* and were brought back.

Determined to have the formality of receiving the surrender of the British squadron take place in the

battle-scarred *Lawrence* and in the presence of her heroic defenders, Master-Commandant Perry again lowered his broad pennant, and jumping into a boat made for his first flagship, which by this time had drifted considerably to leeward. As soon as the survivors in the *Lawrence* learned that the English had surrendered they gave three feeble cheers. Even when afar off they recognized Perry in the boat, and the news that he was coming aboard quickly spread through the brig, while those who were able gathered at the gangway. As they stood there, awaiting their commander, they formed a striking group. Few of them were uninjured. Many of them had an arm or leg bound and splinted, others had blood-soaked bandages around their heads or other parts of the body, the clothing of all was torn and steeped in gore, while their faces and arms were blackened with the grime of burned powder, and had it not been for the streams of perspiration that had furrowed down their faces, revealing streaks of white skin, they might well have been taken for black men. One of the last to join this group was Assistant-Surgeon Usher Parsons. Hearing that his commander was coming aboard, he left his revolting task in the cockpit, and, smeared from head to foot with blood, ascended to the deck, leaving a bloody trail as he walked along and red handmarks on everything that he touched. "When Master-Commandant Perry stepped upon the deck," wrote Dr. Parsons, "it was a time of conflicting emotions. Not a cheer was heard; the handful of men that was left of the gallant crew silently greeted their commander." As Perry gazed around him the decks presented the appearance of a slaughter house. The only sounds that broke the mournful silence were the groans of the wounded and dying that came from all parts of the battered flagship. The decks were still slippery with blood. The masts, broken gun carriages, dismounted cannon, coils of rope, and shattered timbers, were smeared with gore, while

fragments of human bodies were visible in every direction.

The surviving officers from the different English vessels now began to arrive alongside of the *Lawrence*. One by one they stepped over the gangway and cast a wondering glance at the destruction and butchery they had caused and the great sufferings the Americans had endured. Then, carefully picking their way over the bodies of the slain, they went aft, where Perry in quiet dignity stood to receive them. As each one presented his sword the American commander bade him retain it. Immediately on receiving the surrender Perry wrote with a pencil on the back of an old letter, using his cap for a desk, his famous dispatch: "We have met the enemy and they are ours—two ships, two brigs, one schooner and one sloop," which he sent to General William Henry Harrison by Midshipman Forrest. Arrangements were then made for collecting the dead in both squadrons and preparing them for burial. Each body was sewed in a canvas shroud with a cannon ball at the foot, and as the moon rose over the lake on that beautiful September evening they were dropped over the sides of the vessels into the clear waters, where they rapidly sank, swirling round and round and growing more and more indistinct until they vanished. On the morning of September 12th the bodies of Lieutenant John Brooks, Jr., and Midshipman John Clark, of the American squadron, and of Captain Finnis and Lieutenants Thomas Stokoe and John Garland, of the English squadron, were buried side by side on South Bass Island.

The loss in the American squadron was: *Lawrence*, twenty-two killed and sixty-one wounded; *Niagara*, two killed and twenty-five wounded; *Ariel*, one killed and three wounded; *Scorpion*, two killed; *Caledonia*, three wounded; *Somers*, two wounded; *Trippe*, two wounded; in all, twenty-seven killed and ninety-six wounded, making a total of one hundred and twenty-

three.[1] Twelve of the American quarter-deck officers were killed. Besides those already mentioned, the following were wounded: Midshipmen Dulany Forrest, Augustus Swartwout, Thomas Claxton, John C. Cummings and Sailing-Master William Vigneron Taylor. In this action one of the *Ariel's* guns, two of the long guns in the brigs and the *Caledonia's* two long guns burst. The loss in the British squadron was forty-one killed and ninety-four wounded, making a total of one hundred and thirty-five.[2] Commander Barclay conducted himself throughout the battle with great bravery. He was twice wounded, once in the thigh and again in the shoulder, so that he lost the use of his remaining arm. The first lieutenant of the *Detroit* was killed, and the purser, J. M. Hoffmeister, was severely wounded in the knee. In the *Queen Charlotte*, Captain Finnis was mortally wounded early in the action and died the same evening, while his first lieutenant, Thomas Stokoe, and Midshipman James Foster also were desperately wounded. Lieutenant Buchan and Lieutenant F. Rolette, of the *Lady Prevost*, were wounded, the former having been shot through the face by one of the American marines. When Perry first noticed him, Buchan was standing alone on the deck of his vessel (all his men having run below), leaning against the companionway, resting his chin on his hands and looking at the *Niagara* with a fixed, meaningless stare. It was afterward learned that the man had lost his mind from the effects of his wound. Lieutenant Bignell, the commander of the *Hunter*, and Master's-Mate Henry Gateshill were wounded, and so was Master's-Mate J. Campbell of the *Chippewa*. Lieutenant S. James Garden was killed. The *Detroit* and the *Queen Charlotte*, having much of their standing rigging cut away, while at anchor in

[1] Official report of Master-Commandant Perry.

[2] Official report of Commander Barclay.

Put-in-Bay two days afterward rolled their masts out in a gale. The colors of the *Detroit*, the *Lady Prevost*, the *Hunter*, the *Little Belt* and the *Chippewa* are preserved in the Naval Institute building at Annapolis.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Americans:	54	1,428	490	27	96	123	Time 3h. 15m.
British:	63	852	502	41	94	135	

The fire of the *Lawrence* was not so effective as it might have been, owing to the fact that her carronades had been overshotted, some of them having been loaded with round, grape and canister, and in some instances with langrage on top of that. It is said that many of her round shot struck the enemy's hull and rebounded into the lake, while others remained sticking in the sides without penetrating. When the Americans boarded the *Detroit* they found a pet bear lapping the blood of his recent masters. Two panic-stricken Indian chiefs, dressed in the uniform of British sailors, were discovered skulking in the hold of the *Detroit*. They, with other Indians, had been placed in the tops to pick off the American officers, but becoming terrified when the cannonading began they fled into "the uttermost parts of the ship," and when brought before Perry they expected to be tortured. "Our surrender was unconditional. All the prisoners who were not wounded were put on board the *Porcupine* and afterward were landed at Cannon River, and from thence they were sent to Chillicothe. The conduct of Perry was magnanimous, every kindness being shown to the wounded and prisoners, and it made a deep impression in his favor upon all our hearts. He showed himself as humane toward the fallen as he had shown himself brave in the presence of a resisting foe. The commander of the *Porcupine*, to which we were transferred, was equally kind. He ordered food and grog to be served to us when we went on board, which was at an unseasonable hour, and

was quite unexpected, it being but the dictates of his humanity."[1] "Captain Perry has behaved in a most humane and attentive manner, not only to myself and officers, but to all the wounded."[2]

In speaking of the conduct of his officers and men Master-Commandant Perry said: "Lieutenant Yarnall, although several times wounded, refused to quit the deck. Midshipman Forrest and Sailing-Master Taylor were of great assistance to me. I have great pain in reporting the death of Lieutenant John Brooks, of the marines, and Midshipmen Henry Laub, of the *Lawrence*, and John Clark, of the *Scorpion;* they were valuable and promising officers. Samuel Hambleton, purser, who volunteered his services on deck, was severely wounded late in the action. Midshipmen Thomas Claxton and Augustus Swartwout, of the *Lawrence*, were severely wounded. Lieutenants Smith and John J. Edwards and Midshipman Nelson Webster, of the *Niagara*, behaved in a very handsome manner. Captain Brevoort, of the army, who acted as a volunteer marine in the *Niagara*, is an excellent and brave officer, and did great execution with his musketry. Lieutenant Turner, of the *Caledonia*, brought that vessel into action in a most able manner, and is an officer who in all situations may be relied on. The *Ariel*, Lieutenant Packett, and the *Scorpion*, Sailing-Master Champlin, were enabled to get into action early, and were of great service. Master-Commandant Elliott spoke in the highest terms of Humphrey Magrath, purser, who had been dispatched in a boat on service previously to my getting on board the *Niagara*, and, being a seaman, had rendered essential service since the action by taking charge of one of the prizes. Of Master-Commandant Elliott, already so well known to the Government, it would be almost superfluous to

[1] Account of John Chapman.

[2] Official report of Commander Barclay.

speak. In this action he evinced his characteristic bravery and judgment."

The result of this battle was awaited with great anxiety by all the American settlers in that part of the country, for Proctor and Tecumseh were at Malden with five thousand men, ready to cross the frontier and devastate the territory. The roar of the cannonading resounded many miles along the shores of Lake Erie, and all day long terrified men, women and children in breathless suspense awaited the outcome, ready to flee from their homes if the dreaded savages, under the guidance of British officers, were again let loose on them. By this victory the enemy was compelled to evacuate Detroit and Michigan, and on the 23d of September Captain Perry conveyed twelve hundred troops up the lake and took possession of Malden. On the 27th he reoccupied Detroit in conjunction with the army, so that what had been lost by the land forces in 1812 was recovered by the navy in 1813. On the 2d of October Master-Commandant Elliott ascended the Thames with the *Scorpion*, the *Porcupine* and the *Tigress*.

Master-Commandant Perry was promoted to the rank of captain, his commission bearing the date of his great victory, but it did not reach him until the 29th of November. On the 25th of October he resigned from his command on Lake Erie, and was appointed commander of the new 44-gun frigate *Java*, then fitting out at Baltimore. Congress awarded gold medals to Captain Perry and to Master-Commandant Elliott, silver medals to each of the commissioned officers, a silver medal to the nearest male relatives of Lieutenant Brooks, of the marines, and swords to the nearest male relatives of Midshipmen Henry Laub, Thomas Claxton and John Clark, besides three months' extra pay to all the officers, seamen and marines. Congress voted two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars to the captors of the British squadron as

prize money, which was divided as follows: Captain Chauncey, as the superior officer on the Great Lakes, $12,750; Captain Perry and Master-Commandant Elliott, $7,140 each (besides which Congress voted Captain Perry an additional $5,000); each commander of a gunboat, lieutenant, sailing-master and lieutenant of marines, $2,295 each; midshipmen, $811 each; petty officers, $447 each; marines and sailors, $209 each.

Orlando Allen, in a paper read before the Buffalo Historical Society, April, 1863, said: "When the Erie Canal was opened the guns of Perry's squadron were placed along the whole line of the new water way, about ten miles apart, and when the first fleet of boats left Buffalo the fact was literally announced in 'thunder tones' in one hour and twenty minutes to the citizens of New York, by a serial discharge of these guns."

NOTE.—Thomas Holdup Stevens, who commanded the *Trippe* with such distinguished bravery in this action, became a midshipman in 1809 and volunteered for service on the lakes early in the war. He took part in the night attack on the English works opposite Black Rock, and was one of the leaders of a detachment that captured the enemy's artillery and of a scaling party which dislodged the British grenadiers. In this brilliant exploit nine of the twelve naval officers participating were killed or wounded. Although wounded in the hand by a canister shot, he remained on the British side of the river after the naval force had retired. He, with two other midshipmen, made their escape across the Niagara River in a leaky canoe. For his bravery in this action he was made lieutenant. In the battle of Lake Erie he boldly passed the *Tigress* and the *Porcupine*, and poured grape and canister into the *Queen Charlotte* until she struck. For his conspicuous services in this action Congress voted him a silver medal and the citizens of Charleston gave him a sword. In 1814 he was ordered to the new 44-gun frigate *Java*. In the war for the suppression of West India piracy he again won distinction as the commander of the *Asp*, and then of the *Jackal* and the *Shark*. He was made master commandant, March 3, 1825. He reached the highest rank at that time in the navy—that of captain—January 27, 1836, and died in Washington, January 22, 1841, while in command of the Washington Navy Yard. His son, Thomas Holdup Stevens, is now a rear-admiral in the navy.

CHAPTER X.

THE ACTIVE NAVAL WAR OF 1813.

The success of the little navy of the United States in its struggle against the mistress of the ocean in the first seven months of the war was so great that Congress determined to increase its naval force, and on the 2d of January, 1813, it ordered the construction of four ships of the line to carry not fewer than seventy-four guns each, six 44-gun frigates and six sloops of war, the last to be armed with twenty short 32-pounders and two long guns.

On the 30th of April, Captain John Rodgers, in the *President*, again accompanied by the *Congress*, Captain John Smith, sailed from Boston on his third cruise against the enemy. On the 2d of May he fell in with the British 18-gun sloop of war *Curlew*, Captain Michael Head, but after a protracted chase the sloop escaped. A few days afterward the frigates separated. The *Congress*, taking a southeast course, cruised for many months in the south Atlantic, but meeting little success, Captain Smith returned to the United States, arriving at Portsmouth on the 14th of December. In this cruise of two hundred and twenty-nine days the *Congress* took but four merchantmen. The *President* reached the Grand Banks, where Captain Rodgers hoped to intercept vessels engaged in the West India and Quebec trade. But in this he was disappointed, and, stretching over to the Azores, he cruised in the vicinity of those islands until the 6th of June, when, shaping his course northward, he endeavored to fall in with the West India fleet. Failing in this, he cruised

off the Shetland Islands, and then put into North Bergen for supplies. On the 19th of July he was off North Cape for the purpose of intercepting the Archangel fleet, but after waiting some days in vain for these ships, he made sail on the 2d of August for the United States.

On the 23d of September, when a little to the south of Nantucket Shoals, the *President* descried a schooner that was flying a private signal, and the Americans hoisted a signal in return. Upon this the stranger promptly ran down and reported herself to be the *High Flyer*, Lieutenant George Hutchinson, tender to the ship of the line *San Domingo*. Captain Rodgers ordered one of his officers to dress in a British uniform and go aboard the *High Flyer*. The commander of the tender, however, did not wait to be boarded, but manned his gig and pulled for the *President*, supposing her to be an English frigate. In the mean time the American officer had reached the *High Flyer* and demanded of the lieutenant in command the book of private signals and instructions. These were handed over, upon which the officer returned to the *President*. By this artifice Captain Rodgers came into possession of the British signals, and also Admiral Warren's private instructions to all commanders in his fleet, besides ascertaining the position of the English ships on the North American station, the force of each, and their intended movements. A private circular was found, instructing British commanders to capture the *President* at any cost. This valuable information was forwarded to the Secretary of the Navy, and enabled our cruisers, which otherwise must have remained blockaded, to get to sea. In this cruise of one hundred and forty-seven days the *President* captured twelve vessels, while many times her force was employed in looking for her in distant seas.

On the 14th of July the United States 3-gun sloop *Asp*, commanded by Midshipman J. B. Sigourney, who

had served under Master-Commandant James Lawrence in the *Hornet*, while in Yeocomico Creek, Virginia, was attacked by a boat party from English war vessels. Being repelled in their first attack, the British returned with re-enforcements and succeeded in taking the craft, and after setting her on fire they returned to their boats. Upon this the Americans hastened to the *Asp* and extinguished the flames. In this affair the enemy gave no quarter. Midshipman Sigourney was shot through the body in the first attack, but he refused to go below. While he was sitting on the deck, leaning against the mast, animating his men by his example, a British marine stepped up to him and deliberately shot him through the head. Midshipman Henry M. M'Clintock succeeded him in the command. Out of a crew of twenty-one men the *Asp* lost ten,[1] while the enemy's loss was even greater.

The *Argus*, on her return from her cruise under Master-Commandant Arthur Sinclair, was placed under the command of Master-Commandant William Henry Allen, who had been the first lieutenant in the *United States* during her engagement with the *Macedonian*. The *Argus* was ordered to convey William H. Crawford, United States minister, and suite to France. Sailing from New York on the 18th of June, 1813, they reached L'Orient after a passage of twenty-three days. Remaining in port only long enough to refit, Master-Commandant Allen sailed again for the English Channel, and then around by Land's End into the Irish Sea. In this short cruise the little brig captured twenty vessels, valued at two and a half million dollars, most of which were destroyed, a few of the more valuable cargoes being sent to France. This destruction of British commerce spread consternation among English merchants; for a time only a few vessels ventured from port, while insurance rose to ruinous rates, and

[1] Official report of Midshipman M'Clintock.

cruisers were hastily fitted and sent out to destroy the mischievous *Argus*. On the night of August 13th Master-Commandant Allen captured a vessel from Oporto, which he burned a little before daylight, the *Argus* being then in latitude 52° 15′ North and longitude 5° 50′ West, about fifteen miles west of St. David's Head. As day broke, a large brig was discovered bearing down upon the *Argus* under a press of canvas, the wind being from the south and the *Argus* standing close hauled on the starboard tack. The stranger soon proved to be a heavy brig of war, and the Americans made preparations for battle, notwithstanding the fact that their vessel was smaller than their antagonist. For some time Master-Commandant Allen manœuvred to gain the weather gage, but failing in this he shortened sail and awaited the enemy. At 6 A. M., August 14th, the stranger ranged alongside and without preliminary formalities opened with her starboard battery, to which the *Argus* promptly responded with her port broadside. The action began at grape and canister distance, which range was rapidly diminished as the vessels drew near to each other. In about four minutes Master-Commandant Allen's left leg was carried away by a round shot, but he refused to be taken below, and endeavored to give his orders while lying on the quarter-deck, half raising himself by his elbow. But the heroic man soon fainted from loss of blood, and at 6.08 A. M. was carried below. By this time the main braces, main spring stay, gaff and trysail mast of the *Argus* were shot away, and at 6.12 A. M. her first lieutenant, William H. Watson, received a grape-shot wound on the head which felled him to the deck, and he was carried below unconscious. The command then devolved upon Lieutenant William Howard Allen (Midshipmen Richard Delphy and W. W. Edwards having been killed early in the action), who continued the fight with great skill and perseverance. The *Argus* had now lost her spritsail yard and most of the

standing rigging on the port side of the foremast. The enemy at 6.14 A. M., endeavored to cross the wake of the *Argus* so as to rake; but Lieutenant Allen adroitly evaded the manœuvre by suddenly throwing all aback, and at the same time seized his opportunity to sweep his antagonist fore and aft with a broadside. At 6.18 A. M. the preventer main braces and maintopsail tie of the American brig were shot away, and while she was deprived of the use of her after sails the English again attempted to rake her. This time they succeeded, and poured in a full broadside; then, ranging on her starboard side, they opened a fresh battery.

By 6.25 A. M. the wheel ropes and running rigging of every description had been shot away, leaving the *Argus* unmanageable; and, taking advantage of this, the enemy selected his position and soon was pouring in broadsides with impunity. At this crisis Lieutenant Watson recovered consciousness and appeared on deck, only to find that the Englishman was having it all his own way. As a last resort, an attempt was made to board, which the enemy easily frustrated. But the Americans still refused to surrender, though all this time the *Argus* was an unresisting hulk. After enduring the Englishman's cannonading for fifteen minutes without striking a blow in return, the *Argus*, at 6.47 A. M. struck her colors, and the enemy then boarded over her bow. The victor proved to be the British brig *Pelican*, Captain John Fordyce Maples. On the 12th of August the *Pelican* had dropped anchor at Queenstown, but being informed that an American brig was in the neighborhood destroying British shipping, Captain Maples immediately got under way and sailed in search of her. He was guided to the object of his search by the light from the burning merchantman from Oporto.

The *Pelican* mounted sixteen short 32-pounders, two long 6-pounders, one short 12-pounder, and two

short 6-pounders, making a total of twenty-one guns,[1] or two hundred and seventy-four pounds of metal to the broadside. The *Argus* was built in Boston by Edward Hart, and carried eighteen short 24-pounders and two long 12-pounders, making twenty guns,[2] and two hundred and twelve pounds actual weight of metal to the broadside. This gave the *Pelican* a superiority of more than a fourth. In 1799, under the command of Captain Searle, the *Pelican* drove the French frigate *Media* into Guadaloupe after an action of two hours. The *Argus* sailed from the United States with one hundred and fifty-seven men, but this number had been reduced by prize crews to one hundred and twenty-five. She lost six killed and seventeen wounded,[3] among the former being Midshipmen Richard Delphy and William W. Edwards, of whose gallantry Lieutenant Watson spoke in the highest terms. Among the wounded were Boatswain M'Leod and Mr. White, the carpenter. The *Pelican's* crew is given at one hundred and sixteen, of whom two were killed and five wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Argus:	20	212	125	6	17	23	Time
Pelican:	21	274	116	2	5	7	47m.

The *Argus* sustained severe injuries in her hull, nearly all her shrouds were shot away, and both masts were greatly damaged. The *Pelican's* sides were full of shot that did not penetrate; her sails were much torn, and several spars were wounded. Two shot passed through the boatswain's and carpenter's cabins, and two of her carronades were dismounted. The *Argus* was more skillfully handled than the British brig, which was especially noticeable when the former threw all aback and not only prevented the

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 79.
[2] Official report of Captain Maples.
[3] Official report of Lieutenant Watson.

Englishman from raking but turned the tables by securing a raking position for herself. This vast difference between the excellent navigating of the *Argus* and her poor exhibition of gunnery naturally leads to deeper inquiry. The belief that some extraordinary circumstance must have been the cause of this deficiency at the great guns, when all else about the brig was admirable, is confirmed when we investigate William Allen's record as a naval officer. In gunnery he was deemed specially efficient, and for his thoroughness in this particular he was officially noticed and commended by his superiors. In his report of the action between the *United States* and the *Macedonian*, Captain Decatur wrote: "Where all met my fullest expectations, it would be unjust in me to discriminate. Permit me, however, to recommend to your particular notice my first lieutenant, William H. Allen. He has served with me upward of five years, and to his unremitted exertions in disciplining the crew is to be imputed the obvious superiority of our gunnery exhibited in the results of this combat." It would hardly be reasonable to suppose that William Allen, in his first independent command—the ambition of every officer—neglected the branch of discipline to which in a large measure he owed his rapid promotion; and even poor gunnery, with so broad a mark as a brig not twenty yards away, should have been far more effective. The explanation made by an officer in the *Argus* is undoubtedly the true solution of this mystery. "The brig [*Argus*] having expended a good deal of her powder, Mr. Allen took a quantity on board from a prize bound to South America. Shortly after, the gunner had occasion to fill a number of cylinders, and he used the powder of the prize, which lay uppermost in the magazines. It was afterward ascertained that this powder was condemned powder of the British Government, going to South America to be sold. In proof of its effects, the officer

in question assured us that the *Pelican's* side was dotted with impressions of shots that did not enter."

Having taken aboard a prize crew, the *Argus* made for Plymouth, where she arrived on the 16th of August. Master-Commandant Allen was immediately taken to Mill Prison Hospital, his left leg having been amputated above the knee by his own surgeon. All possible attention and kindness were shown to him, but his life's cruise was over, and on the 18th he was mercifully released from suffering. On the 21st the remains were buried with the highest military honors, the navy, marine and army officers in port participating in the sad rites. An English paper describes the burial as follows: "The procession left Mill Prison at twelve o'clock. The coffin was covered with a velvet pall, on which was spread the American ensign under which the action was fought. Upon this the hat and sword of the deceased were laid. On the coffin being removed to the hearse the guards saluted, and when it was deposited in the hearse the procession moved forward, the band playing the Dead March in Saul. On arrival near the church the guards clubbed arms, single file inward, through which the procession passed to the church. The corpse was now carried in and placed in the center aisle, where the funeral service was read; after which the body was interred in the south yard, on the right of Midshipman Delphy, of the *Argus*."

William Henry Allen was a disciplinarian of the highest order. He had a noble presence, and was fearless in battle, but was gentle in nature. His career under Captain Decatur, especially during his action with the *Macedonian*, had been most creditable. An Irish paper contains this notice of him: "It would be injustice not to notice the excellent conduct of William Allen, of the *Argus*. He allowed the passengers and crews of the *Betsey* and *Mariner* to remove every article of their private property, and, in order that they might have the liberty to do so, he would not suffer one

of his officers or crew to be present below while they were employed in packing up their effects. Captain Gilbert, of the *Mariner*, had left some articles of cabin furniture behind, which William Allen sent after him in his boat. A greatcoat belonging to an officer of one of the captured ships was missing, and it was found in the possession of one of the crew of the *Argus*. William Allen immediately ordered the man to be tied up, and he actually received a severe flogging. Considerable sums in specie were saved by the passengers, as William Allen would not allow his men to touch a single article." The British Naval Chronicle says: "His death was conceived to be chiefly occasioned by the great loss of blood which he sustained previous to amputation by his persisting in remaining on deck after he was wounded. Throughout the whole he bore his sufferings with that manly, determined fortitude and composure which might be expected of a brave and gallant officer, and never once complained of pain; but his mind constantly dwelt on the loss of his ship, which he regretted in the most feeling and manly manner. In person he was about six feet high, a model of symmetry and manly comeliness, and in his manners and conversation a highly finished and accomplished gentleman."[1]

[1] William Henry Allen was born in Providence, R. I., October 21, 1784. His father was an officer in the Revolution; his mother was a sister of a governor of the State. He entered the navy as a midshipman April 28, 1800, and made his first cruise in the *George Washington*, then commanded by Captain Bainbridge. His second cruise was in the *Philadelphia*, Captain Samuel Barron, and his third was in the *John Adams*, Captain John Rodgers. He was acting lieutenant in 1805, when in the *Constitution*, under John Rodgers, and he was third lieutenant in the *Chesapeake* in 1807, when that ship was captured by the *Leopard*. The only gun fired by the Americans was touched off by a live coal which Mr. Allen seized from the galley fire with his fingers. Lieutenant Allen was in the *Chesapeake* when she was commanded by Captain Decatur, and he followed that officer to the *United States* and distinguished himself during the action between that frigate and the *Macedonian*. In 1813 he was promoted to the rank of master-commandant. Allen Street in New York city was named in his memory.

When war seemed imminent with Great Britain Congress caused several hundred gunboats to be constructed for coast and harbor defense. The idea of the gunboat system seems to have been derived from the French. About two thousand of these craft were built at Boulogne when Napoleon contemplated an invasion of England. The French boats were sixty feet over all, sixteen feet beam, and drew about two and a half feet of water. They carried a 24- or 36-pounder in the bow and a field piece in the stern, and each boat was manned by a hundred men and was rowed with twenty-five oars on a side. The first gunboats employed in the United States were for the defense of the Delaware, 1775–'76, and they succeeded in driving the British frigate *Roebuck* out of the river; and at the outbreak of the War of 1812 there were two hundred and fifty-seven vessels of this class stationed in our rivers and harbors. Although the "gunboat system" of naval warfare has been shown to be demoralizing on the service and ineffective when opposed to improved ordnance, yet these vessels did some good service in the War of 1812, so that a brief review of the arguments in favor of this system of naval warfare may be interesting. They are: 1. Frigates and ships of the line are too heavy to act in narrow and shoal waters, but gunboats are movable batteries that are capable of attacking the largest ships. 2. A gunboat can carry as heavy metal as a 100-gun ship of the line. Thus a frigate attacked by thirty-seven gunboats would have the force of a ship of the line against her. 3. When a ship fights she presents her entire broadside as a target. Thus a ship of forty guns would be about one hundred and fifty feet long and ten feet out of water, presenting fifteen hundred square feet of surface, while only twenty of her guns could be brought to bear. A gunboat has ten feet beam and is only two feet out of water, thus presenting only twenty square feet of surface when in action, as a gunboat always fires with her bow pointed at the

enemy. Thus twenty gunboats carrying twenty guns present an aggregate surface of four hundred square feet, while the 40-gun frigate exposes fifteen hundred square feet, and brings only twenty guns to bear. 4. If a shot should pass an inch or two above a gunboat it would do no harm, but if it should pass above the hull of a frigate it might carry away a mast or injure the rigging. 5. The two most serious accidents that can happen to a ship are the loss of her rudder and injuries to her sailing-gear. Neither of these accidents can happen to a gunboat, as she is not dependent on masts, but is guided and propelled by sweeps. 6. The nearer the gun is to the level of the water the more accurate the aim and the more liable to strike on or below the water line. 7. As the gunboats are separated, each gun of the frigate must be aimed at some particular gunboat, which presents only a mark of twenty square feet, and should the ball miss its aim by an inch it would pass harmlessly beyond. On the other hand, all the gunboats can aim at one solid mark of fifteen hundred square feet. 8. A 36-gun frigate cost three hundred thousand dollars. Gunboats cost four thousand dollars each, so that seventy-five could be built for three hundred thousand dollars. The *Constellation*, for instance, would have only twenty-five guns with which to oppose seventy-five of the heaviest metal.

On the 18th of June three of the enemy's frigates anchored in Hampton Roads, and on the following day fifteen gunboats, under Master-Commandant Joseph Tarbell, moved down to attack them. The boats advanced in two divisions, one commanded by Lieutenant John M. Gardner and the other by Lieutenant Robert G. Henley. Approaching the frigates in the night, the gunboats anchored in the form of a crescent, and at 4 A. M. of the 20th they opened a heavy fire. One of the many serious defects of the gunboat system now became apparent. The recoil of the guns caused such rocking that it not only prevented accurate firing, but even

threatened to upset the boats. The first ship attacked, the 32-gun frigate *Narcissus*, was roughly handled, and had she not been rescued by her consort, the 38-gun frigate *Junon*, Captain Saunders, she might have been destroyed or captured. After a spirited cannonade the frigates retired and the boats returned up the river. Lieutenant William Branford Shubrick (who was in the *Hornet-Peacock* fight, and who afterward was in the *Constitution* during her remarkable engagement with the *Cyane* and *Levant*) on this occasion commanded one of the gunboats nearest to the enemy and won much applause by the style in which he covered the retreat and drew the entire fire of the frigates on his boat. The loss on the part of the Americans was Master's-Mate Allison killed and two men wounded. The gunboat commanded by Sailing-Master Nantz was so crippled as to be in danger of capture, but she was taken in tow by the boat under the command of Lieutenant Shubrick and carried out of danger.

On the 22d of June the enemy made a boat attack on Craney Island, where Captain John Cassin, commander of the naval forces at Norfolk, had stationed Lieutenants B. J. Neale, William Branford Shubrick and James Sanders with one hundred seamen and fifty marines, mostly from the *Constellation*, under Lieutenant H. B. Breckenridge, and it was largely due to their coolness and effective firing that the British were repelled. One of their barges, fifty feet long, painted green and named the *Centipede*, commanded by Captain Hanchett, of the *Diadem*, a natural son of George IV, was hulled by a round shot that passed through her diagonally and cut off the legs of several men. Captain Hanchett himself received a severe contusion of the thigh. Under the direction of Midshipmen Josiah Tattnall and David Geisinger the *Centipede* was hauled ashore by Midshipman Bladen Dulany and acting Sailing-Master George F. De la Roche. A Frenchman was found in the barge with both legs taken off.

He was carried ashore and placed in a hammock, where he soon died. A Scotch terrier also was found in the boat. In all, five barges were sunk. Forty prisoners were taken, and the enemy's loss in killed or wounded was heavy. The officers and men of the *Constellation* were applauded for their skillful and spirited defense.

On the 29th of July, 1813, Master-Commandant Angus, who commanded a flotilla of gunboats in the Delaware, learned that the English 16-gun sloop of war *Martin* had rounded the Cape, and while he was reconnoitering the British 38-gun frigate *Junon* also came to and anchored within supporting distance of the sloop. Samuel Angus, with eight gunboats and two sloops, advanced to the attack and opened a spirited cannonade. Unfortunately, gunboat No. 121, commanded by Sailing-Master William W. Sheed, in spite of every exertion of her crew, drifted more than a mile beyond her consorts. Seeing this, the enemy sent eight boats against her with a strong party of men. Mr. Shead anchored and fired two shot at the enemy, but in doing so disabled his only gun. The English then carried the gunboat by storm, but they sustained a loss of seven killed and twelve wounded. The American loss was seven wounded.

While the *United States* and the *Macedonian* were blockaded at New London two boats were sent out from each of these frigates, under the command of Lieutenant John Gallagher, to make an excursion into Long Island Sound. In the night, a small boat commanded by Midshipman Abraham S. Ten Eyck was separated from the others and was driven upon Gardiner's Island. As morning broke, the Americans, finding themselves under the guns of the British frigate *Ramillies*, landed and concealed themselves on shore. Soon afterward a boat came ashore from the British ship and a number of officers and seamen went to a house near by. Mr. Ten Eyck approached the house and made prisoners of two lieutenants, one midship-

man, one master's mate and five seamen. Finding that they were discovered by the people in the frigate, he released his prisoners on parole and made his escape with his men to Long Island, whence, on the following night, they were taken off by the other boats.

About this time several attempts at submarine warfare were made. As the Navy Department refused to adopt this method, these experiments were undertaken by private individuals. In June, 1813, John Scudder fitted up the trading schooner *Eagle* as a floating mine, which was temptingly covered with naval stores. This boat, as it was expected, was captured by the *Ramillies* while attempting to run through the British blockading squadron, her crew escaping to the shore. Soon after the enemy boarded the mine was ignited by clockwork and blew up a British lieutenant and ten men. Subsequently a citizen of Norwich, Conn., invented a submarine boat by which he passed under the *Ramillies* three times, and nearly succeeded in blowing her up. Captain Hardy, of the *Ramillies*, became so alarmed that he caused a cable to be passed under his ship every two hours, and finally he threatened to burn all towns on the sound if the Americans persisted in this disagreeable method of warfare. Mr. Mix, of the navy, also nearly succeeded in destroying the British 74-gun ship *Plantagenet* off Cape Henry, Virginia, by carrying out a torpedo in an open boat called the *Chesapeake Avenger*, under cover of night, and casting it off so it would float down on the enemy. The machine exploded a few seconds too soon, but near enough to cause the *Plantagenet* to roll heavily into the chasm and nearly upset.

In the earlier part of the war the *Enterprise*, Master-Commandant Johnston Blakeley, the little 12-gun schooner that figured so prominently during the French and Tripolitan wars, had been employed on the coast of Maine to protect the local trade against privateers

that were sent out from neighboring English ports. In August, 1813, she captured a privateer named the *Fly*, and soon afterward Master-Commandant Blakeley was transferred to the new *Wasp*, while Lieutenant William Burrows was placed in charge of the *Enterprise*. On the 1st of September Lieutenant Burrows sailed from Portsmouth, and on the 3d he gave chase to a schooner. On the 4th he stood out to sea in quest of several privateers that had been reported in the vicinity of Monhegan, and while he was nearing Penguin Point on the following morning a brig was discovered getting under way. The stranger was soon made out to be a British brig of war, upon which Lieutenant Burrows cleared for action. It was then about noon, and a fresh breeze from the southwest gave the vessels an opportunity to close. The *Enterprise* displayed three flags and stood out to sea, while the enemy fired several guns by way of a challenge, and, hoisting four ensigns, followed her.

At this moment occurred an episode that reveals the spirit of the American seamen of that day. While the two vessels were standing out so as to clear the land, Lieutenant Burrows ordered a long gun to be run out of one of the stern ports. This made it necessary to cut away some timbers, and the men, who were as yet unacquainted with their commander, got the impression that he was endeavoring to evade the enemy. As they were burning with impatience to engage, they requested the young officer in command of the forecastle—Midshipman John H. Aulick, afterward captain—to go aft and express to their commander the desire of the crew to fight. That officer so far complied as to speak privately to First-Lieutenant Edward Rutley McCall, who assured the men that Lieutenant Burrows had no intention of avoiding an engagement. The answer was satisfactory, and the crew awaited the contest with renewed eagerness.

At 3 P. M. the *Enterprise* shortened sail and awaited her antagonist. At 3.20 P. M. the brigs were within half pistol-shot, and the battle began, the *Enterprise* using her port battery and the enemy his starboard. At the first broadside, while Lieutenant Burrows was assisting his men in running out a carronade, he was mortally wounded by a musket ball, but he refused to be carried below, requesting that the flag might not be struck. The *Enterprise* soon drew ahead and crossed her antagonist's course, and in doing so managed to get in one or two raking shot from the long gun that had been run out of the stern port. The combatants now changed batteries, the Americans using their starboard and the English their port guns, the two vessels running along side by side, the *Enterprise* keeping just off the enemy's bow. By 3.30 P. M. the Englishman had lost his main topmast and fore topsail yard. Lieutenant McCall, who had succeeded to the command of the ship, now set his foresail, ran around on the enemy's bow, and poured in several raking fires, which, at 4 P. M., compelled the Englishman to call for quarter, saying that his colors were nailed to the mast and could not be hauled down. The prize was the British brig *Boxer*, Captain Samuel Blythe, who was killed at the first broadside by an 18-pound shot through his abdomen. When the British commander's sword was placed in the hands of the dying Burrows, he exclaimed, "I am satisfied, I die content," and a few minutes later he breathed his last.

The *Enterprise* mounted fourteen short 18-pounders and two long 9-pounders, making sixteen guns and one hundred and twenty-five actual pounds of metal to the broadside. Out of the crew of one hundred and two[1] she lost Lieutenant Burrows and one seaman, killed; Midshipman Kirven Waters and the carpenter's mate, mortally wounded; and eight men

[1] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 56.

seriously injured.[1] English accounts give the *Boxer* twelve short 18-pounders and two long 6-pounders, in all fourteen guns,[2] with one hundred and fourteen pounds of metal to the broadside. Her crew has been variously estimated from seventy to one hundred. Captain Hull visited the *Boxer* shortly after the engagement, and wrote: "I yesterday visited the two brigs. We find it impossible to get at the number of killed; no papers are found by which we can ascertain it. I, however, counted upward of ninety hammocks, which were in her nettings, with beds in them, besides several beds without hammocks; and she has excellent accommodations for all her officers below in the staterooms; so that I have no doubt that she had one hundred men on board."[3] She lost four killed and seventeen wounded.[4]

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Enterprise:	16	125	102	2	10	12	Time 40 m.
Boxer:	14	114	70–100	4	17	21	

This battle again illustrates the overweening confidence of the British commander at this period. For several days before the *Boxer* sailed from St. Johns the English made every exertion to fit her out with a view of meeting the *Enterprise*. Captain Blythe knew his antagonist to be the *Enterprise* before he closed, and he also was familiar with her force, yet the fact of his nailing his flag to the mast and the eagerness with which he sought the engagement show his confidence in the result of the battle. The result of the *Chesapeake-Shannon* fight led British naval officers to believe that it was only necessary for them to

[1] Official report of Lieutenant McCall.

[2] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 75.

[3] Extract of a letter from Captain Hull to Captain Bainbridge, September 10, 1813.

[4] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 76.

get fairly alongside in order to secure victory. Blythe was at Halifax when Captain Broke arrived there with the *Chesapeake*, and evidently he was imbued with this idea when he sighted the *Enterprise*. At the time the Americans hailed to ascertain if the *Boxer* had struck, one of the British officers jumped upon a gun, and, shaking both fists at the Americans, cried out, "No, no, no!" with several strong adjectives interjected. To those in the *Enterprise* the spectacle would have been ludicrous, had it not been for the pitiful condition to which their enemy was reduced. The officer in question evidently was animated with that pseudo heroism which possessed Lieutenant Hope, of the *Macedonian*, when he advised Captain Carden to sink with his ship rather than surrender, well knowing that his advice would not be followed; or like the crew of the *Java*, who, after their ship had been reduced to a helpless wreck, tacked an ensign to the stump of their mizzenmast when the *Constitution* was out of gunshot repairing damages, so that they could report to the Lords of the Admiralty, "We still awaited the attack of the enemy." The officer of the *Boxer* was promptly ordered down by a lieutenant. Congress voted a gold medal to the nearest male relative of Lieutenant Burrows, and a silver one to each of his commissioned officers. Lieutenant McCall, in his official report, commended the bravery and steadiness of his officers, and especially the gallantry of Second-Lieutenant T. G. Tillinghast.

No vessels better matched than the *Enterprise* and the *Boxer* were could have met, yet the difference in the damage sustained by them was extraordinary. Captain Hull said: "I was astonished to see the difference of injury sustained in the action. The *Enterprise* has but one 18-pound shot in her hull, and one in her mainmast; her sails are much cut with grapeshot, and there are a great number of grape lodged in her sides, but no injury done by them. The *Boxer*

has eighteen or twenty 18-pound shot in her hull, most of them at the water's edge, several stands of 18-pound grape stick in her sides, and such a quantity of small grape that I did not undertake to count them. Her masts and spars are literally cut to pieces, several of the guns dismounted and unfit for service; her top-gallant forecastle nearly taken off by the shot, her boats cut to pieces and her quarters injured in proportion. To give you an idea of the quantity of shot about her, I inform you that I counted in her main-mast alone three 18-pound-shot holes, eighteen large grapeshot holes, sixteen musket-shot holes, and a large number of smaller shot holes, without counting above the catharpins." One of the causes assigned by the British court-martial convened to try the surviving officers of the *Boxer* for the loss of their ship, was the "greater degree of skill in the direction of her [the *Enterprise's*] fire." The London Times of October 22, 1813, says: "But what we regret to perceive stated, and trust will be found much exaggerated, is, that the *Boxer* was literally cut to pieces in sails, rigging, spars and hull; whilst the *Enterprise* (her antagonist) was in a situation to commence a similar action immediately afterward. The fact seems to be but too clearly established that the Americans have some superior mode of firing; and we can not be too anxiously employed in discerning to what circumstances that superority is owing."

The two vessels were brought into Portland on the 7th of September, and were moored at the end of Union wharf. The coffins containing the bodies were placed in ten-oared barges draped in black, and amid the booming of minute guns they were rowed to minute strokes by ship's masters and mates to the shore. A procession was formed at the landing-place and moved up Fore and Pleasant Streets to High Street, and then down Main and Middle Streets to the Rev. Mr. Payne's meetinghouse, where public services were held. The

remains were then buried side by side in the Eastern Cemetery. Lieutenant Burrows had never before seen a naval battle. Captain Blythe had distinguished himself in the conquest of Cayenne, and was honored by the Prince Regent with a memorial for his gallantry. He had also been one of the pallbearers when Captain Lawrence was buried in Halifax, three months before. Thus in 1813 the American people lost three naval commanders in quick succession, Lawrence, Allen and Burrows. A few years after Lieutenant Burrows' death, Matthew L. Davis, of New York, happened to be walking through the graveyard in Portland when his attention was attracted to the neglected grave of this gallant officer, and he immediately caused a handsome tombstone to be erected.



Graves of Burrows and Blythe.

"The flag worn by the *Enterprise* in this action, and afterward used as the pall which covered the body of Captain Burrows at his funeral, "had fifteen stripes and fifteen stars, the latter arranged in parallel lines." This flag, which was old on the day of the engagement, and patched with a still older one, is now in the possession of H. G. Quincy, of Portland, and was exhibited at the Massachusetts Mechanics' Charitable Fair, in Boston, October, 1873. After the action it bore the marks of fifty-nine shot holes, chiefly musketry.[1] It is now in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.[2]

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[1] Preble's History of the United States Flag, p. 327.

[2] William Burrows was born in Kinderton, near Philadelphia, October 6, 1785. In early life he evinced that reserve which in later years developed into a strong aversion for society. He seemed to aspire to an in-

On the 4th of December, 1813, Captain Rodgers, in the *President*, sailed from Providence on his fourth cruise against the enemy. Making Barbadoes, he cruised in that vicinity until the 16th of January, when he ran down to Surinam and Berbice and between the islands of Tobago and Grenada. Striking north from this point through the Caribbean Sea, he went through the Mona Passage, and on the 18th of February, 1814, arrived at New York. The *President* entered the harbor during the night, and while she was waiting for the tide, the British 38-gun frigate *Loire* approached, but on ascertaining the *President's* force drew off. During this cruise of seventy-six days the *President* captured four merchantmen.

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dependence of mind, to scorn the old fashion of life, and, depending entirely on his own resources, to strike out into original methods and new expedients. As he showed a decided inclination for the sea, a midshipman's warrant was secured for him, and in 1799 he made his first cruise in the sloop of war *Portsmouth*, Captain M'Neal. In 1803 he was under Captain Preble in the *Constitution*, and in this frigate he was made acting lieutenant for his efficient services in the Tripolitan war. Returning to the United States in 1807, he was employed in various capacities. While in the *Hornet* as first lieutenant, he so distinguished himself by his skillful seamanship, during a violent gale, that the officers attributed the preservation of the sloop entirely to his presence of mind and ability. Feeling that he had been unjustly outranked by some junior officers whom he had commanded in the Tripolitan war, Lieutenant Burrows resigned from the service. This was not accepted, but after some difficulty he obtained a furlough. He then sailed as first mate in a merchantman for Canton. On the return voyage this vessel, the *Thomas Penrose*, was captured by a British ship and the officers were made prisoners, but Lieutenant Burrows was permitted to return home on parole. Being exchanged soon afterward, he was appointed to the command of the *Enterprise*, and from this period we have followed his career in the text.

CHAPTER XI.

CAPTAIN PORTER'S CRUISE IN THE PACIFIC.

In keeping with the Government's policy of sending light squadrons into distant seas, to draw British cruisers from the American coast in pursuit, the 32-gun frigate *Essex*, Captain David Porter, sailed from the Delaware on the 28th of October, 1812, to join the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* on a cruise in the Indian Ocean. In anticipation of an extended voyage Captain Porter shipped an unusually large complement of officers and seamen, among the midshipmen being David Glasgow Farragut, then only eleven years old. The *Essex* was the smallest frigate in the navy. She had been built, in 1799, by the citizens of Salem, Mass., then a town of only a few thousand inhabitants, and was given to the Government for the purpose of protecting American commerce from the depredations of the French and English. The Salem Gazette for October 26, 1798, contains the following notice: "At a meeting in the courthouse in this town, on Tuesday evening last, of those gentlemen who have subscribed to build a ship for the service of the United States, it was voted unanimously to build a frigate of thirty-two guns." During the winter of 1798-'99 the streets of Salem were enlivened with teams and sleds drawing timber, principally white oak, from Danvers, Topsfield, Boxford and Andover to Winter Island, the site selected for building the ship. Rear-Admiral George H. Preble, of the United States navy, in a paper read before the Essex Historical Institute, said: "The Federalists considered

it a patriotic duty to cut down the finest sticks of their wood lots to help build the 'noble structure' which was to chastise French insolence and piracy." The keel was laid April 13, 1799, and on the 30th of the following September thousands of men, women, and children assembled to witness the launch. The new frigate was gayly bedecked with flags and streamers, and as she went into the water "with a most easy and graceful motion" the people gave three cheers, her guns, which had been landed and formed in a battery near by, thundered out a salute, and the hills of Essex County (for which the frigate was named) greeted their offspring with echoing applause. The newborn frigate sailed for the Indian Ocean in December, 1799, and she was the first United States war vessel to double the Cape of Good Hope. Afterward she took part in the naval operations in the Mediterranean. Her services at the outbreak of the War of 1812 have been recorded in preceding pages.

After clearing the Capes of the Delaware, Captain Porter sailed due east with the intention of getting in the track of British merchantmen. But nothing was seen of the enemy's ships, and on the 27th of November he anchored at Port Praya, the first rendezvous appointed by Captain Bainbridge. Although Portugal at this time was an ally of Great Britain, the Portuguese governor of this island treated the Americans with every civility, and cheerfully furnished such supplies as he possessed. Wishing to conceal the destination of the *Essex*, Captain Porter, on leaving this place, stood southeast, so as to create the belief that he was bound for the coast of Africa; but when he was out of sight of land he changed his course to south-southwest, so as to make Fernando de Noronha, the second place at which he was to meet the *Constitution* and the *Hornet*. On the 11th of December the *Essex* crossed the equator in longitude 30° west, and at two o'clock in the afternoon of the follow-

ing day she discovered a sail to windward, which had the appearance of a vessel of war. With a view of decoying the stranger under his guns, Captain Porter



Cruise of the Essex.

displayed the British signals that he had captured in his previous cruise, but they were ineffectual, and he made all sail in chase. About 4 P. M. the stranger, which was now seen to be a brig of war, made signals, but as they were not recognized they only increased the desire of the Americans to close before night should enable the brig to escape. By sunset the chase showed English colors, and a few minutes afterward she displayed night signals. Paying no attention to these, the *Essex* kept on her course, bowling along at the rate of eight knots an hour. This thoroughly alarmed the people in the brig, and they could be seen bending studding sails and throwing overboard anchors, boats and other heavy articles. At this time the vessels were about two miles apart, just distinguishable in the deepening gloom; each had every

stitch of canvas set, besides resorting to extreme measures for increasing speed. By 8 P. M. the *Essex* was perceptibly getting the better of the race, for now her bow chasers were within gunshot; but Captain Porter, being anxious to injure the brig as little as possible, did not open fire, and by 9 P. M. he came within musket shot, and a few minutes later ran alongside, when he hailed and ordered her to heave to. The chase, instead of obeying, gave a sudden yaw, and endeavored to run under the *Essex's* stern, so as to rake, hoping to make her escape in the night before the frigate could sufficiently recover from the confusion to pursue her, but this attempt was frustrated by Captain Porter, who quickly brought his ship around, and, laying the enemy abeam, poured in a volley of musketry, upon which the brig struck, having lost one man killed. She proved to be the British packet *Nocton*, bound for Falmouth, carrying ten guns and thirty-one men. On the following day the prisoners, with a quantity of specie found aboard, which amounted to about fifty-five thousand dollars, were transferred to the *Essex*, while Midshipman William Finch (afterward Captain Bolton), with sixteen men, was placed in charge of the prize and instructed to make for the nearest American port. In carrying out this order Mr. Finch had proceeded as far as Bermuda, when he was overtaken by a violent gale, and as the weather cleared up he discovered a British frigate to windward. The *Nocton* was put on different points of sailing, but she rapidly lost ground, and finally, as a last resort, she was put before the wind. In spite of all efforts, however, the stranger, which proved to be the *Belvidera*, soon overhauled her, and running close on the *Nocton's* quarter prepared to pour in a broadside. Mr. Finch thereupon surrendered.

Meantime the *Essex* continued her course southward, and on the 14th of December the mountainous peak of the penal island of Fernando de Noronha tow-

ered sullenly out of the dreary waste of water. In keeping with his policy of concealing the movements of the *Essex*, Captain Porter did not enter the port, but disguised his ship as a merchantman and lay to off the entrance of the harbor, while Lieutenant John Downes went ashore to inform the Governor that the ship in the offing was the British merchantman *Fanny*, Captain Johnson, from London. In a few hours Lieutenant Downes returned with the information that the British 44-gun frigate *Acasta* and the 20-gun sloop of war *Morgiana* had stopped at the port only the week before, and had left a letter with the Governor addressed to Sir James Yeo, of the British 32-gun frigate *Southampton*. Captain Porter was satisfied that the alleged "*Acasta*" and "*Morgiana*" were none other than the *Constitution* and the *Hornet*, and as he had been instructed to appear as Sir James Yeo, of the 32-gun frigate *Southampton*, he felt sure that the letter was intended for him, and sending Lieutenant Downes ashore with a present of porter and cheese to the Governor, he assured that magistrate that he was sailing for Rio de Janeiro and would forward the letter to England. The Governor sent the letter aboard the *Essex*, and on breaking it open Captain Porter read the following: "My dear Mediterranean friend, probably you may stop here. Don't attempt to water; it is attended with too much difficulty. I learned before I left England that you were bound to the Brazil coast; if so, we may meet at Bahia or Rio de Janeiro. I should be happy to meet and converse on our old affairs of captivity. Recollect our secret in those times. Your friend of His Majesty's ship *Acasta*, Kerr." Captain Porter and Captain Bainbridge had been prisoners together in Tripoli, and the reference to "Mediterranean" and "captivity" gave Porter the hint. He called for a candle and held the letter to the flame, when the following instructions written in sympathetic ink became legible: "I am bound off Bahia, thence off Cape Frio, where I

intend to cruise until the 1st of January. Go off Cape Frio, to the northward of Rio de Janeiro, and keep a lookout for me. Your friend."

Captain Porter accordingly made for Cape Frio, arriving off that point on the afternoon of the 25th of December. At that time the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* were off Bahia, and four days later the former captured the *Java*. After cruising in the vicinity of Cape Frio several days in the expectation of falling in with Captain Bainbridge, the *Essex* was drawn away in chase. While beating back to her station she captured the British schooner *Elizabeth*, and from her master learned that she was one of a convoy of six vessels that had left Rio de Janeiro the day before bound for Bahia, but the *Elizabeth* put back on account of a leakage. The *Essex* immediately crowded all sail, hoping to intercept the convoy, and while beating up the coast she ascertained from Portuguese vessels that the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* had been off that port. After struggling a week against strong northerly winds, Captain Porter gave over the attempt and put into St. Catherine, where he learned that the 74-gun ship *Montagu* had compelled the *Hornet* to raise the blockade on the *Bonne Citoyenne*, and that the *Hornet* and the *Constitution* had put to sea.

This left the *Essex* free to choose her own course, and Captain Porter conceived the bold plan of doubling the Horn and cruising in the Pacific Ocean. This cruise was particularly hazardous, as Great Britain exerted a controlling influence over the South American countries, so that the *Essex* could hardly expect a friendly reception at any of their ports. To obviate this difficulty, Captain Porter determined to live on the enemy at sea, to replenish his stores from captured vessels, and, if the frigate stood in urgent need of repairs, to run to some of the numerous islands and there effect the more necessary changes. This scheme, if it could be carried out, offered the further advantage of taking

the enemy unawares and rendering pursuit almost impossible, while it also enabled the Americans to strike a severe blow at British commerce in the Pacific before a sufficient force could be collected to drive them away. Yet another difficulty stood in the way of this audacious enterprise. The season for doubling the Horn had passed, and bold indeed was the mariner who hoped to weather that tempestuous point at this time of the year. But Captain Porter, placing every confidence in his ship, officers and crew, set out upon his perilous voyage on the 26th of January, 1813.

Scarcely had the frigate left the Island of St. Catherine when Captain Porter was confronted by one of the numerous dangers that the undertaking involved. On the 27th dysentery made its appearance among the crew, and threatened the entire ship's company, but the excellent sanitary condition maintained in the *Essex*, together with her captain's untiring care for the health of his crew, soon caused it to disappear. Cape Horn was made on the 14th of February, and as the weather had been moderate up to this time all were congratulating themselves on their escape from the terrors of the Cape. About noon, however, a storm suddenly came up and raised an irregular and dangerous sea. Gale succeeded gale, with deceitful intervals of calm encouraging a spread of canvas, which was torn away again by sudden blasts. On the 28th of February the ship came into smooth water and there was every indication that the worst was past, when the wind began to freshen and soon increased until it became one of the most dreadful storms of the cruise. It was hoped that the great violence of the wind would soon expend itself, but this hope failing, many of the crew, alarmed by the terrors of a lee shore, and exhausted by fatigue and anxiety, began to consider their situation hopeless. The sea had risen to an extraordinary height, and every moment it threatened to engulf the little *Essex*. The

ship began to take large quantities of water through her waterways and separating timbers, because of the heavy and continued strain she was subjected to, and her masts and bowsprit seemed in danger of going at every lurch. For three days the storm continued, and on the third an enormous wave broke over the ship. The gun-deck ports were stove in from bow to quarter, the weather quarter boat was carried to the wheel, the lee boat was taken off the davits, the extra spars washed from the chains, the head rails swept away, and the hammock stanchions broken. The boatswain was so appalled that he cried out: "The ship's broadside is stove in! We are sinking!" The alarm spread all over the ship, and torrents of water rushing down the hatchways led those below to believe that she was plunging to the bottom of the sea. "This was the only instance," wrote young Farragut, "in which I ever saw a regular good seaman paralyzed by fear of the perils of the sea." The men at the wheel, however, distinguished themselves by their cool intrepidity, and after the storm Captain Porter promoted them, at the same time rebuking the others for their timidity.

By the 5th of March the *Essex* was fairly in the broad Pacific, and soon afterward she dropped anchor off the island of Mocha. Here the men had an opportunity to exercise themselves while a large hunting party brought in hogs and horses, which were salted down and packed. The *Essex* had now been at sea over two months; she had but one chart of the Pacific, and that a very poor one, and she stood in great need of new cordage; but Captain Porter determined not to touch at any town, as he was very desirous of capturing a number of the enemy's ships before his arrival in those waters was discovered. The pressing necessities of the frigate, however, compelled him to put into Valapraiso on the 15th, where he learned that Chili had declared herself independent of Spain.

He put to sea again on the 20th of March, and on

the 25th, learning from the master of the ship *Charles*, of Nantucket, that the American whalers *Walker* and *Barclay* only two days before had been captured off Coquimbo by a Spanish and an English ship, he made sail for the scene of trouble. At eight o'clock in the evening of March 26th a sail was discovered to the north, and on nearer approach she showed Spanish colors, whereupon the *Essex* hoisted the English flag. "Immediately, from her appearance and the description I had received of her, I knew her to be one of the picaroons that had been for a long time harassing our commerce."[1] The stranger quickly ran down, fired a shot ahead of the frigate, and sent an armed boat aboard. This was returned with peremptory orders to come under the lee of the *Essex*, which being done, Captain Porter ran out his guns and commanded her to strike. The stranger proved to be the Peruvian cruiser *Nereyda*, of fifteen guns, which had captured the American whalers. Her commander, still believing that the *Essex* was a British frigate, admitted that he had been cruising against American commerce,[2] and Captain Porter ordered all the *Nereyda's* guns, small arms, ammunition and spars to be thrown overboard; then, having obtained from her commander a list of all vessels in the Pacific known to him, he allowed her to depart. This list contained the names and descriptions of the ships *Nimrod*, *Perseverance*, *Seringapatam*, *Charlton*, *Catherine*, *Thames*, *Greenwich*, *Montezuma*, *Rose* and *Sirius*. These were all that could be remembered, but the Peruvian asserted that there were no fewer than twenty-five English whalers in these waters.

On the 28th of March the *Essex* stood northward, with the expectation of falling in with inward-bound whalers. Captain Porter improved the fine weather

[1] Captain Porter's journal.

[2] Letter from Captain Porter to the Viceroy of Peru, March 26, 1813.

by "disguising our ship, which was done by painting her in such a manner as to conceal her real force and exhibit in its stead the appearance of painted guns, etc.; also by giving her the appearance of having a poop, and otherwise so altering her as to make her look like a Spanish merchant vessel." While he was busy with these changes the lookout reported a large ship standing for the port of Callao, and all sail was immediately made to cut her off. After an hour's chase two more sails standing on the same tack were discovered. The first vessel was overtaken and captured, and on boarding it was found to be the *Barclay*. The other strangers, not seeming to suspect the *Essex*, continued on their course until one was made out to be a coasting brig and the other a "fine-looking ship." But they proved to be Spanish, and were allowed to pass unmolested.

The frigate then took a favorable position for watching the harbor of Callao, but meeting no success here, she made for Chatham Island, of the Galapagos, with the *Barclay* in company, arriving there on the 17th of April. Captian Porter determined to examine the "post-office" at Charles Island—a box nailed to a tree, in which whalers and other vessels deposited records of their movements—but there was nothing for the *Essex*. He cruised from island to island without meeting a sail, until "at daylight on the morning of the 29th [April] I was aroused from my cot, where I had passed a sleepless and anxious night, by the cry of 'Sail ho! sail ho!' which was re-echoed through the ship, and in a moment all hands were on deck." Orders were given to make all sail, and an hour afterward two more large sails appeared above the horizon, bearing away to the southwest. By nine o'clock the *Essex* had under her guns the first vessel, the British whaler *Montezuma*, with fourteen hundred barrels of spermaceti oil aboard. After securing his prize, Captain Porter made sail for the other strangers, which, as he

learned from the master of the *Montezuma*, were the British whalers *Georgiana* and *Policy*, and at this time they were about seven miles distant, making strenuous efforts to escape. At 11 A. M. the wind, which had been light, failed altogether, so that Captain Porter got out his boats and sent a force under Lieutenant John Downes against the ships. By 2 P. M., when the boat party had arrived within a mile of the enemy, the largest ship hoisted English colors and fired several guns, upon which the Americans formed for the attack. "We pulled up in two divisions, and when within a few yards Downes hailed and asked if they had surrendered, at the same time displaying the American colors from a boarding-pike in the bow of his boat. They gave three cheers, and replied, 'We are all Americans.' After taking possession we passed on to the next vessel. The mate was in command and hesitated for some time, but seeing one of our men in the bow of the boat cock his musket, he yielded. We had taken him rather by surprise, as he had to get his guns out of the hold and mount them, and he remarked that, if he had been ready for us, some of us would have returned with bloody noses. The greater part of the crews of both ships were Americans who had been pressed into the English service, and many entered for our ship."[1]

These prizes, together with their cargoes, were estimated to be worth in England half a million dollars. As the *Georgiana* had the reputation of being a fast sailer and was pierced for eighteen guns, and mounted six when she was captured, Captain Porter determined to fit her up as a cruiser. The *Policy* carried ten guns, which, being transferred to the *Georgiana*, gave the latter sixteen light guns. All the small arms and ammunition found in the other prizes were then put aboard the *Georgiana*, and on the 8th of May Lieuten-

[1] Farragut's Journal, edited by Loyall Farragut, p. 22.

ant Downes and forty-one men were placed in charge of her. The American flag was then hoisted and a salute of seventeen guns fired, which was returned by nine guns from the *Essex*. It was hoped that the *Georgiana*, thus equipped, would be able to cope with any of the enemy's numerous privateers. This draft of seamen left the *Essex* with a crew of two hundred and sixty-four men, including officers and those on board the *Barclay*. As it was pleasant weather, Captain Porter overhauled his ship, rove new rigging, bent new sails, restowed the hold and painted the frigate; the captured whalers furnishing the supplies.

On the afternoon of May 28th, the vessels still being in the vicinity of Charles Island, a sail was discovered and chased, but night intervened before she could be overtaken, and Captain Porter, fearing that she would escape by altering her course, ordered the *Montezuma*, the *Barclay* and the *Policy* to stretch out on different courses, so that one of the ships might be in sight of the chase on the following morning. The plan proved successful, for soon after daylight on the 29th the *Montezuma* signaled "a sail to the northward." The *Essex* bore away in chase, but it was fully two hours before anything of the stranger could be made out from the masthead. An exciting chase was maintained throughout the day, and toward evening the *Essex* ran alongside and captured the British letter of marque *Atlantic*, mounting eight 18-pounders. At this moment another strange sail was reported from the masthead, and as the *Atlantic* had the reputation of being the fastest vessel in these waters, Captain Porter put Midshipman M'Knight and eleven men in her and ordered them after the chase, the *Essex* soon following. Night was fast coming on while yet the stranger was hull down, but the pursuit was maintained with dogged perseverance, although there was little chance of coming up with her. At one time they lost sight of the stranger, but after a long search through the night glass

she was again made out, having changed her course in order to elude her pursuers. The *Essex* now rapidly gained, and in a few hours held the chase under her battery. This prize was another British letter of marque, the *Greenwich*, which had sailed from England under the convoy of the 38-gun frigate *Java*. She had on board one hundred tons of water, which at that time was of great value to Captain Porter. The *Atlantic* and the *Greenwich* also were abundantly supplied with provisions of every description, and naval stores, such as cordage, canvas, paints and tar, and eight hundred large tortoises, sufficient to furnish all the ships with fresh provisions for a month. Lieutenant Gamble, of the Marines, with thirteen men, was placed aboard the *Greenwich*. The little squadron now consisted of the *Essex*, carrying forty-six guns and two hundred and forty-five men; the *Georgiana*, sixteen guns and forty-two men; the *Greenwich*, ten guns and fourteen men; the *Atlantic*, six guns and twelve men; the *Montezuma*, two guns and ten men; the *Policy*, ten men; and the *Barclay*, seven men; in all, seven ships, carrying eighty guns and three hundred and forty men, besides which there were eighty prisoners, which made a total of four hundred and twenty.

Captain Porter found himself so encumbered with prisoners and prizes as to be compelled to touch at some neutral port. Accordingly, sail was made for the mainland, and on the 19th of June the squadron dropped anchor in the river Tumbez; but the *Georgiana*, Lieutenant Downes, in the meantime was ordered to cruise and to rejoin the squadron in the Tumbez within a specified time. While thus cruising near James Island, Lieutenant Downes discovered two sails, which ran down to him without the least suspicion of danger; in fact, their masters did not know that they were in the presence of an enemy until they had gone on board the *Georgiana* and were made prisoners. These vessels proved to be the *Catherine*, of eight guns

and twenty-nine men, and the *Rose*, of eight guns and twenty-one men. The prisoners were secured, and prize masters and twenty men were put aboard.

In the afternoon of the same day another sail was discovered, and the *Georgiana* gave chase, and late at night overtook a well-armed privateer. At this time Lieutenant Downes had only twenty men and boys with whom to handle and fight his ship, besides which he had upward of fifty prisoners to guard; but, unmindful of the danger, he boldly ran alongside the stranger and ordered her to strike. To this summons the British commander returned no answer, but was heard ordering his guns to be cleared. The *Georgiana* then fired a shot into the enemy's quarter, upon which they attempted to escape by crowding on sail. Lieutenant Downes then opened fire in earnest, and after the fifth broadside the stranger surrendered, having lost her main topmast and most of her standing and running rigging, and had two of her men killed and six dangerously wounded. This third ship was the *Hector*, of eleven guns and twenty-five men. After putting a prize crew aboard her, the *Georgiana* was left with only ten men, while her number of prisoners was increased to seventy-three, so that it was imperative that she should be disencumbered of her dangerous captives. Accordingly the *Rose* was made a cartel, all her guns were thrown overboard, most of her cargo was destroyed, and the prisoners, being released on parole and put aboard of her, were directed to make for St. Helena, while the *Georgiana*, with her two remaining prizes, made for Tumbez, where she rejoined Captain Porter's squadron on the 24th of June. On the same day Mr. Downes was promoted to the rank of master-commandant, and as the *Atlantic* was a hundred tons larger than the *Georgiana*, and proved much faster, he and his crew, now augmented to sixty, were transferred to the former. Twenty guns were mounted aboard of her, and forthwith the *Atlantic* went under

the name of *Essex Junior*, while all the stores in the other prizes were placed in the *Greenwich*, which was now used as the storeship of the squadron.

Having effected these changes, the squadron put to sea on the 30th of June. On the 4th of July a salute of seventeen guns was fired from the *Essex*, the *Essex Junior* and the *Greenwich*, and "the day was spent in the utmost conviviality." On the 9th the *Essex Junior* was ordered to escort the *Hector*, the *Catherine*, the *Policy*, the *Montezuma* and the *Barclay* (the youthful Farragut in command of the last) to Valparaiso; and having appointed a rendezvous with the *Essex Junior* for September, Captain Porter, with the *Greenwich* and the *Georgiana*, made for the Galapagos. On the 13th of July, off Banks Bay, three sails were discovered. The *Essex* gave chase to the one in the middle, the other strangers making off on different tacks with the *Georgiana* after them, while the slow-sailing *Greenwich* was soon left behind. As the *Essex* was gradually overhauling her chase, Captain Porter became anxious for his storeship, for the inshore stranger, a large, fine-looking ship, was seen standing for her, and the *Greenwich*, having re-enforced her crew from the *Georgiana*, boldly bore down for the stranger. The *Essex* soon secured her prize, which proved to be the English ship *Charlton*, of ten guns, and from her master Captain Porter learned that the other ships were the *Seringapatam*, of fourteen guns and forty men, and the *New Zealander*, of eight guns and twenty-three men. The *Greenwich* continued after the *Seringapatam*, and after several broadsides had been exchanged the latter struck, but immediately afterward made all sail to escape. The dull-sailing *Greenwich* made every endeavor to come up with her, but she would have lost her prize in the fast closing of the night had not the *Essex*, after capturing the *New Zealander*, joined in the pursuit and overhauled the chase about an hour later. The *Charlton*



Captain Porter with his squadron at Nukahiva.

From a picture drawn by Captain Porter. The ship in the center of the picture is the *Essex.*

was now stripped of her armament, and forty-eight paroled prisoners were put aboard of her and ordered to make for Rio de Janeiro. Her eight guns had been transferred to the *Seringapatam*, giving the latter twenty-two in all. On the 25th of July the *Georgiana* was sent to the United States with a full cargo of oil, and as the *Essex* had been at sea nine months the time of enlistment for many of her crew was nearly up, and this opportunity for returning home was offered to those who did not wish to re-enlist; but nearly all desired to continue on the cruise. On the 25th the vessels separated, the *Georgiana* homeward bound, the *Essex*, the *Greenwich*, the *Seringapatam* and the *New Zealander* making for Albemarle Island.

On the morning of the 28th of July a sail was descried to windward, but as the *Essex* was becalmed while the stranger held a light breeze the latter soon ran out of sight. In the night, however, the *Essex* caught the breeze and crowded all sail in the direction the stranger was taking when last seen, and on the following morning Captain Porter had the satisfaction of making out the chase from his masthead. The frigate now rapidly gained until, when she was about four miles distant from the chase, the wind failed, upon which the stranger sent his boats ahead to tow; while Captain Porter resorted to his drags, by means of which he acquired a headway of two knots an hour, at the same time ordering his gig and whaleboat, with some good marksmen, to pull ahead and annoy the enemy. The American sharpshooters did their work effectively, driving the enemy from his boats and compelling him to relinquish towing. By four o'clock the *Essex* had reduced her distance to three miles, when Captain Porter got out his boats for the purpose of boarding. The boats pulled toward the chase in gallant style, despite a galling fire, but when they were about three quarters of a mile from the enemy a breeze sprang up and filled the stranger's sails, and away he went, again

leaving the *Essex* becalmed. By sunset he was hull down, but the boats maintained the pursuit, hoping that the wind would soon die out. It was not until dark that the *Essex* felt the breeze, when, directed by flashes of gunpowder, she was able to follow her boats, and after picking them up she continued on the course that the chase held. But on the following morning the stranger was nowhere to be seen, and at noon the pursuit was abandoned. Greatly mortified at the escape of the enemy after such a long and promising chase, Captain Porter made for James Island, where he anchored on the 4th of August. The *Seringapatam* was now painted to look like the *Essex* and the appearance of the latter was entirely changed, while the *Greenwich* was made to look like a sloop of war; Captain Porter hoping to derive some advantage by means of this deception. On the 22d of the same month the squadron put into Banks Bay.

Leaving the prizes at this place, the *Essex*, on the 24th of August, put to sea, and after sailing among the islands for several weeks without success, Captain Porter, on the 15th of September, discovered a sail southward Not wishing to run the risk of another long chase in the fickle winds of this season, he ordered the fore and main royal yards to be sent down, the mast housed, the ports closed, the sails trimmed in a slovenly manner and every care taken to give the frigate the appearance of a merchantman, and in this disguise the *Essex* kept plying to windward under easy sail. By noon the sail was seen to be a whaler, lying to and "cutting in" blubber. At one o'clock, when the vessels were but four miles apart, the stranger suddenly took alarm, cast off her whale, and made all sail to escape. The *Essex* was immediately trimmed and was soon stretching out in chase, and at four o'clock she was within gunshot, and by firing six or eight times at the stranger induced her to surrender. She was found to be the British letter of marque *Sir*

Andrew Hammond, "pierced for twenty guns, commissioned for sixteen, but had only twelve mounted, with a complement of thirty-six men." The most pleasing phase of this capture was that this ship was the one which on the 28th and 29th of July had led the *Essex* such a long and fruitless chase. "Her captain assured me that our ship had been so strangely altered that he supposed her to be a whale ship, until we were within three or four miles of him and it was too late to escape. Nor did he suppose her to be a frigate until we were within gunshot, and indeed never would have suspected her to be the same ship that had chased him before, as she did not now appear above one half the size she did formerly."[1]



The Essex cruising with her prizes.

The *Essex* and her prizes made for Banks Bay, where, soon after their arrival, they were joined by the *Essex Junior* on her return from Valparaiso. Captain Porter now learned that several English frigates of superior force were in these waters, searching for the mischievous *Essex*. Having captured all the British whalers and privateers of which he had heard, he sailed for the Marquesas Islands, and made Nukahiva on the 23d of October, which place was so well adapted for repairing his ship that it was decided to

[1] Captain Porter's journal.

spend the winter there and to give the vessel a thorough overhauling. Accordingly, a fort was erected to command the bay, the frigate was dismantled, the stores landed, workshops built, the rats—which had become so numerous as to endanger the safety of the ship—smoked out, and extensive repairs begun.

The island of Nukahiva is traversed by valleys which were inhabited by tribes hostile to one another, and in consequence of his friendly relations with the natives in the vicinity of the bay Captain Porter antagonized the others, which enmity soon became so serious that the Americans were compelled to unite with their neighbors in an expedition against the common enemy. After several sharp encounters peace was restored. Young Farragut wrote: "During our stay at this island the youngsters—I among the number—were sent on board the vessel commanded by our chaplain for the purpose of continuing our studies, away from temptation. In November the *New Zealander* was sent to the United States with a full cargo of oil, and both this vessel and the *Georgiana* were recaptured while nearing port. Availing themselves of the liberty given them, the prisoners planned to attack the *Essex Junior* in canoes from the shore, cut her cables and get out of gunshot before being discovered. This done, they hoped to be masters of the situation, for the *Essex* was dismantled, and none of the other vessels were of sufficient force to cope with them. The plot, fortunately, was revealed to Captain Porter, and thenceforth the prisoners were placed in greater security.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HEROIC DEFENSE OF THE ESSEX.

THE *Essex* had now completely destroyed British commerce in this part of the world, for the vessels that had not been captured did not dare to leave port, while American merchant ships received ample protection. Finding that there were no more English merchantmen to be captured, and desirous of meeting an enemy worthy of his ship, Captain Porter determined to sail early in December in search of some of the British cruisers that had been sent out to intercept him. When it was rumored about the squadron that they were to sail in a short time, several of the men expressed dissatisfaction, and some of the seamen in the prizes were loud in their murmurings. The discontent finally became so pronounced that there was danger of mutiny, and the prompt and decisive manner in which Captain Porter met the emergency is graphically described by Farragut as follows: "On the 9th of December, when, as was the custom on Sunday, many of our men visited the *Essex Junior*, and I suppose from having received some intimation that the ship was about to sail dissatisfaction was expressed, as the sailors were loath to give up the demoralizing pleasures of the island. On Monday morning, December 10th, I saw that all was not right. Captain Porter took his cutlass in his hand, which he laid on the capstan. He then, though shaking with anger, addressed the crew, who had been mustered on the port side of the deck, with forced composure. 'All of you who are in favor of weighing the anchor when I give the order pass over to the starboard

side; you who are of a different determination stay on the larboard side.' All of them, to a man, walked over to the starboard. He then called up a man named Robert White, an Englishman, and said to him in a severe tone: 'How is this? Did you not tell them on board the *Essex Junior* that the crew of this ship would refuse to weigh anchor?' The man tremblingly replied, 'No, sir.' 'You lie, you scoundrel!' said the captain. 'Where is the list of men who visited the *Essex Junior* on Sunday?' He then made several of them step forward, and put the question to them one after the other, 'Did you not hear of this thing on board the *Essex Junior?*' 'Yes, sir,' was the response. Then turning to White, he exclaimed, 'Run, you scoundrel, for your life!' and away the fellow went over the starboard gangway. I believe Captain Porter would have killed the man at the moment if he had caught him, but it was equally evident he did not make any great exertion to do so. White got into a passing canoe, and we never saw him again. Captain Porter then addressed the men in a hearty manner, praising their good conduct, and holding up to reprobation such miserable villainies. At the same time he gave them to understand that he always intended to act summarily when such disgraceful affairs came to his notice, and intimated to them that he 'would blow them all to eternity before they should succeed in a conspiracy.' Having delivered this address, he wheeled around and ordered them to man the capstan, and the music to play 'The Girl I left Behind me.' The fiddle struck up, the anchor fairly flew to the bows, and we made sail and stood out to sea."

A garrison of twenty men, under Lieutenant John M. Gamble, of the marines, and Midshipmen Feltus and Clark, was left at the island in charge of the prizes *Seringapatam*, *Sir Andrew Hammond* and *Greenwich*. The *Essex* and the *Essex Junior* on the 12th of December sailed for the coast of South Amer-

ica, where they arrived early in January, 1814. After taking in water at San Maria, and looking into the port of Concepcion, they reached Valparaiso on the 3d of February, where Captain Porter learned that the British 36-gun frigate *Phœbe*, Captain James Hillyar, had arrived on the coast in search of the *Essex*, and he determined to await her at Valparaiso. On the 7th of February Captain Porter gave a reception to the officials of Valparaiso and other citizens and their families. On the following morning, while the men were busy taking down the awnings, bunting and other decorations used at the reception, the *Essex Junior*, which had been cruising in the offing to keep a lookout for the expected British frigates, signaled "two enemy's ships in sight." At this moment half of the *Essex's* crew was at liberty on shore, while the frigate itself was in some disorder from the festivities of the night before. Captain Porter fired a gun and hoisted the recall cornet for "all boats and men to return." The strangers proved to be the *Phœbe*, and, contrary to Captain Porter's expectation, the 18-gun ship-sloop *Cherub*, Captain Tucker, in company. When these ships appeared off the harbor "the mate of an English merchantman which was lying in port went immediately on board the *Phœbe* and told Captain Hillyar that half of our men were on shore, and that the *Essex* would fall an easy prey."[1] Hearing this, Captain Hillyar, with the *Cherub*, ran into the harbor on a wind, but by the time the enemy was within gunshot the *Essex* was fully prepared for action. On the *Phœbe* came, with her crew at quarters, and, doubling the *Essex's* quarter, Captain Hillyar put his helm down and luffed up on her starboard bow, bringing the frigates within fifteen feet of each other. At this critical moment Captain Hillyar, who had exchanged friendly visits with the American commander several years before when

[1] Farragut's journal.

they were in the Mediterranean, appeared on an after gun, and said: "Captain Hillyar's compliments to Captain Porter, and hopes he is well." Porter replied: "Very well, I thank you; but I hope you will not come too near, for fear some accident might take place which would be disagreeable to you," and with a wave of his trumpet the kedge anchors went up to the yard arms, ready to grapple the enemy. Captain Hillyar braced back his yards, and remarked that if he did fall aboard he begged to assure the American captain it would be entirely accidental. "Well," said Porter, "you have no business where you are. If you touch a rope yarn of this ship I shall board instantly." He then hailed the *Essex Junior*, and told Lieutenant Downes to be prepared to repel the enemy. "When the *Phœbe* was close alongside," wrote Farragut, "and all hands were at quarters, the powder boys stationed with slow matches ready to discharge the guns, the boarders, cutlass in hand, standing by to board in the smoke, as was our custom, an intoxicated youth saw, or imagined that he saw, through the port some one in the *Phœbe* grinning at him. 'My fine fellow, I'll stop your making faces,' he exclaimed, and was just about to fire his gun, when Lieutenant M'Knight saw the movement and with a blow sprawled him on the deck. Had that gun been fired, I am convinced that the *Phœbe* would have been ours." In getting out of her dangerous position the *Phœbe* passed her jib-boom over the *Essex's* deck, thus exposing herself to a raking fire from the entire broadside of the American frigate, while the *Essex Junior* held a raking position under her stern, "so that in fifteen minutes we could have taken or destroyed her."[1] The fact that Captain Hillyar believed the *Essex* to be unprepared for action, together with this extraordinary manœuvre, is strong evidence that he intended to attack her in spite of the

[1] Captain Porter to the Secretary of the Navy, July 13, 1814.



The Phœbe and the Cherub attacking the Essex.
From a picture drawn by Captain Porter.

neutrality of the port, and his subsequent conduct leaves no room for doubt on this point.

After remaining in port several days, the *Phœbe* and the *Cherub* got to sea and blockaded the harbor. One night Captain Porter headed a boat party against the *Phœbe*, who pulled with muffled oars toward the enemy and came so close that the Englishmen could be heard conversing on the forecastle, from which conversation it was discovered that the attack was expected and that the men were lying at their quarters. This necessitated an abandonment of the attack, and the boats returned without being discovered. On the 27th of February, the *Cherub* being about three miles to leeward, Captain Hillyar ran close in, hoisted a flag bearing the motto, "God and country, British sailors' best rights: traitors offend both," and fired a gun to windward. Captain Porter hoisted a flag at his mizzenmast bearing the motto, "God, our country, and liberty: tyrants offend them," and in five minutes he had the *Essex* standing down the harbor under topsails and jib; but as the frigates were getting within range and the *Essex* had already opened fire, the *Phœbe* put about, set her studding sails, and ran down to her consort. This breach of good faith on the part of Captain Hillyar aroused much indignation among the Americans, and but one satisfactory explanation of it can be found, that he had received strict orders not to attack the *Essex* in single combat.

For six weeks the *Phœbe* and the *Cherub* mounted guard over the *Essex*. Learning that the British 38-gun frigate *Tagus* and two other frigates had sailed in search of the *Essex*, and that the *Raccoon* was expected at Valparaiso in a short time, Captain Porter determined to get to sea in spite of the blockade, and appointed a rendezvous with the *Essex Junior;* but on the 28th of March, in a heavy gale from the south, the *Essex* parted her port cable and dragged her starboard anchor to sea. The enemy at this time was close in to

the western side of the bay, and Captain Porter determined to run the blockade by passing to windward. He took in his topgallant sails, which were set over single-reefed topsails, and braced up for this purpose. The attempt seemed to be successful, but scarcely had the topgallant sails been clewed down when, just as the ship was rounding Point of Angels, a squall struck her, causing her to heel nearly gunwale under, and although the topsail halyards were immediately let go the yards became jammed and would not fall. A moment later the main topmast gave way under the strain and went over the side, carrying the men who were on the main topgallant yard into the sea, where they were lost. In view of this disaster, Captain Porter endeavored to regain his anchorage, but owing to the crippled condition of his ship, he was unable to do so. He then ran into a small bay and anchored about three quarters of a mile to leeward of the battery on the east side of the harbor, and let go his anchor "within pistol-shot of the shore."[1] Soon the *Phœbe* and the *Cherub*, bedecked with flags, were seen coming down, evidently with the intention of engaging in spite of the neutrality of the place, and, notwithstanding the disabled condition of his frigate, Captain Porter made every preparation for a desperate resistance. Springs were put on the cables, and American colors hoisted at the gaff, at the fore and mizzen masts, and at the cap of the mainmast.

At 3.54 P. M. the *Phœbe*, having selected a position under the *Essex's* stern, while the *Cherub* took one on her starboard bow, opened at long range. The *Phœbe's* fire proved very destructive, as the *Essex* had scarcely a long gun that would bear, but the *Cherub* soon found her position too close for her, upon which she ran around to the *Essex's* stern and opened a raking fire.

[1] Official report of Captain Porter. James, vol. vi, p. 152, says "within half a mile of the shore."

With much difficulty three long 12-pounders were got aft and run out of the stern ports, and were fired with such skill that in half an hour both the British ships hauled out of range. In this short cannonade Captain Hillyar reported that the *Phœbe* "lost the use of her mainsail, jib and mainstay," while James adds, "Her jib-boom was also badly wounded, and her fore, main and mizzen stays shot away," and, as Captain Hillyar quaintly remarked, "appearances were a little inauspicious." In the first half hour of the fight the acting sailing-master, Edward Barnewell, and the boatswain, Edward Linscott, of the *Essex*, got springs on her cables three different times to enable her to bring her broadside to bear, but each time they were shot away. The frigate also had received many injuries, while several men had been killed or wounded.

At thirty-five minutes past five the British ships, having been out of range over an hour, again advanced to the attack. Availing themselves of the *Essex's* misfortune, they took positions off her starboard quarter, out of reach of her carronades, and where the stern guns could not be brought to bear, and opened a heavy fire. Finding that it was impossible to return the enemy's fire, Captain Porter determined to become the assailant, and ordered the cables to be cut. It was then discovered that nearly all the running rigging had been carried away, the flying-jib halyards being the only ropes in a condition to hoist sail. After many fruitless attempts to make sail, the jib was set and gradually brought the *Essex's* formidable broadside into play. The frigate then opened a heavy fire, with such effect that in a few moments the *Cherub* took herself out of the reach of the carronades, and did not again come into close quarters, Captain Tucker preferring to fight at long range, where he could fire at the *Essex* with impunity. The *Phœbe* also, now that the *Essex* could bring her short guns into play, thought better of her ardor, and, avail-

ing herself of the comparatively uninjured state of her rigging, stood off at long range.

It is interesting in this connection to call to mind the statement of Sir Howard Douglas in reference to American commanders preferring to fight at long range. "The United States commanders so circumspectly and cautiously adapted their tactics to the superior power of their armaments, that, even when opposed to very inferior numbers and quality of ordnance, they would neither approach nor permit us to join in close battle until they had gained some decisive advantage from the superior faculties of their long guns in distant cannonade, and from the intrepid, uncircumspect, and often very exposed approach of assailants who had long been accustomed to contemn all manœuvring, and who only considered how to rush soonest into yardarm action. Such, unquestionably, was the character of these proceedings [i. e., naval operations between the United States and Great Britain]. The uncircumspect gallantry of our [English] commanders led our ships unguardedly into snares which wary caution had spread."[1]

By this time the *Essex* was severely damaged, many of her carronades were dismounted, and the slaughter had become horrible. One gun was manned three times, and fifteen men were killed at it. Seeing that the enemy would not come to close quarters, where he could fire in return, Captain Porter determined to run his ship aground, and, having destroyed her, escape to the shore with his men. Accordingly she was headed for the land, but while she was still half a mile away the wind shifted and payed her head down on the *Phœbe*, when she was again exposed to raking broadsides. During this manœuvre the enemy cautiously followed at long range, careful to keep out of reach of the carronades. At this moment Master-Commandant Downes, from the *Essex Junior*,

[1] Sir Howard Douglas on Naval Gunnery, p. 533.

which vessel, according to orders, had regained the port, being useless against men-of-war, came aboard for orders, and after a hurried consultation it was decided to anchor, in hope that the wind would carry the enemy out of range, and the hawser was bent to the sheet anchor and let go. This had the effect of bringing the frigate around, but at the next moment the cable parted, again leaving her at the enemy's mercy. To add to their disasters, an explosion now occurred below decks, and soon afterward smoke and flames were bursting from the hatchway. As the fire was near the magazine, threatening to blow up the ship at any moment, Captain Porter gave those who wished to incur the risk permission to swim ashore. A number availed themselves of this, and some gained the land, but many were drowned. The greater part of the crew preferred sharing with him the fate of the ship.

Further resistance was now a useless waste of life, for the *Essex* was being hulled at every shot, while she could not strike a blow in return. Captain Porter summoned a council of war, but it was found that Lieutenant Stephen Decatur M'Knight was the only surviving officer in the ship. Lieutenant James P. Wilmer, while getting the sheet anchor from the bow, had been knocked overboard by a splinter and drowned; Acting-Lieutenant John G. Cowel was mortally wounded; and Midshipman William H. Odenheimer had also been carried overboard by a huge splinter. Edward Barnewell, acting sailing-master, after receiving serious wounds on the face and chest, had been carried below. The steerage, wardroom, berth deck and cockpit were crowded with the mangled dead and wounded, and many of the latter were killed while the surgeon was attending them. Of the two hundred and fifty-five souls of the ship's company only seventy-five, including officers, were fit for duty. In the face of these awful facts, Captain Porter had no

alternative but to surrender, and at 6.20 P. M.,[1] after an heroic defense of two hours and twenty minutes, the order was given. In his official report Captain Porter praised the gallantry of all his officers, and especially of Lieutenants M'Knight and Wilmer; Acting-Lieutenants Odenheimer and Cowel; Samuel B. Johnston, of the marines; Midshipmen George W. Isaacs, David G. Farragut and Henry W. Ogden; Acting-Midshipmen James Terry, James R. Lyman and Samuel Dusenbury; Acting-Sailing-Master Edward Barnewell; Master's-Mate William Pierce; Acting-Purser M. W. Bostwick; and the boatswain, Edward Linscott. Acting-Surgeon Richard K. Hoffman, Acting Surgeon's-Mate Alexander Montgomery and the chaplain, D. P. Adams, also were highly commended. "The defense of the *Essex*," said Captain Hillyar in his official report, "taking into consideration our superiority of force, the very discouraging circumstance of her having lost her main topmast and being twice on fire, did honor to her brave defenders, and most fully evinced the courage of Captain Porter and those under his command. Her colors were not struck until the loss in killed or wounded was so awfully great, and her shattered condition so seriously bad, as to render further resistance unavailing."

The *Essex*, mounted forty short 32-pounders and six long 12-pounders, giving her a total of forty-six guns and twelve hundred and fifty-seven pounds actual weight of metal. The *Phœbe*, according to English accounts, carried twenty-six long 18-pounders, four long 9-pounders, fourteen short 32-pounders, one short 18-pounder, and one short 12-pounder, making in all forty-six guns and nine hundred and eighty-two pounds of metal; besides this, she carried four swivels in her tops. The *Cherub* carried eighteen short 32-pounders, six short 18-pounders, two long 6-pounders and one

[1] Official report of Captain Porter; also official report of Captain Hillyar. The latter says that the firing began "a little past 4."

short 12-pounder, giving a total of twenty-seven guns and seven hundred and eight pounds of metal. Out of her complement of two hundred and fifty-five men the *Essex* had fifty-eight killed, sixty-six wounded and thirty-one missing, probably drowned in attempting to swim ashore; making a total of one hundred and fifty-five. The *Phœbe* lost four killed, including First-Lieutenant William Ingram, and seven wounded out of her crew of three hundred. The *Cherub's* crew numbered one hundred and twenty-one, and she had one killed and three wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded	Missing.	Total.	
Essex:	46	1,257	255	58	66	31	155	Time
British:	73	1,690	421	5	10		15	2h. 20m.

As this action was fought at long range, the British selecting their distance so as to keep out of reach of the *Essex's* short guns, it would be more accurate to give only the long guns of the opposing forces:

Comparative forces at long range.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing	Total.	
Essex:	6	72	255	58	66	31	155	Time
British:	38	624	421	5	10		15	2h. 20m.

The *Essex* was literally cut to pieces, and had she been at a distance from port she would have sunk. The *Phœbe* received seven heavy shot between wind and water, and one about three feet under water, while her main and mizzen masts and her sails and rigging were seriously injured. The *Cherub* received several shot in the hull, some of her lower shrouds were cut through, and her main-topmast stay and most of her running rigging were carried away.

No one can question Captain Hillyar's gallantry, for his record as a naval officer during the preceding ten years was highly creditable; but another phase of his conduct forces itself upon our attention. We have

seen that on the day of the battle he did not hesitate to violate the neutrality of the port. This fact, together with the attendant and subsequent circumstances of his so nearly fouling the *Essex* when she was anchored in the harbor, February 8th, compels us to believe that on that occasion he intended to attack the *Essex* while, as he supposed, most of her crew was on shore, and that he was only deterred from such attack when he unexpectedly found her in perfect readiness to receive him. Captain Hillyar has left a stain upon his record by his attack on the *Essex* in a neutral port, and when she was "so near the shore that some of the shot even struck among the citizens."[1]



City of Valparaiso.

In striking contrast is the course pursued by Captain Porter. When the *Phœbe* so nearly fouled the *Essex*—with the intention of attacking, as Captain Porter and his officers fully believed—the American commander had it in his power to rake the *Phœbe* with his entire broadside, while the *Essex Junior* held a commanding position astern, and the *Cherub* was too far away to

[1] Washington Irving, Spanish Papers, vol. ii, p. 111.

render assistance ; but, in spite of these circumstances, Captain Porter respected the neutrality of the port and forebore. In the action of the 28th of March, Captain Porter proved himself an officer of rare ability and consummate courage. The noble defense of the *Essex* against such overwhelming odds has but few equals in the annals of naval history. He fought like a lion at bay, and his officers poured out their life's blood at his bidding, while the men sacrificed life and limb rather than surrender.

The *Essex Junior*, by an agreement between Captain Porter and Captain Hillyar, was made a cartel and sent to the United States with the survivors. Arriving off Sandy Hook, July 5, 1814, the ship was brought to by the British razee *Saturn*, Captain Nash. The English commander questioned Captain Hillyar's authority to enter into such an arrangement, and in the delay that ensued Captain Porter informed the British lieutenant in charge that if the ship was detained he would consider himself released from his parole and again a prisoner of war. As they were not allowed to proceed immediately, Captain Porter with a few men quietly got into a boat on the leeward side of the *Essex Junior* and pulled some distance toward the shore before he was discovered. As soon as the escape was made known the *Saturn* bore down on the fugitives, but just before she reached them a dense fog settled over the water, completely enveloping the Americans, so that, by changing her course, the boat succeeded in eluding her pursuers, and although at one time she was so near as to distinguish voices on board the *Saturn*, she made her escape. After rowing all night the party landed at Babylon, Long Island, where Captain Porter was taken for a spy, and so strange and incredible seemed the account he gave of himself to the people of that village that it was some time before he was released. The travel-worn adventurers now secured a horse and wagon, by which means they journeyed to Brooklyn,

and thence to New York. At the latter place Captain Porter found his comrades, the *Essex Junior* having been allowed to enter the harbor. The few survivors of the gallant three hundred and nineteen that sailed in the *Essex* October 28, 1812, were met with every demonstration of joy. The people took the horses from Captain Porter's carriage and hauled him to his lodgings, and an entertainment was given to the crew of the *Essex* at Tammany Hall. At Philadelphia Captain Porter was received by the mayor and a military escort. The great throng of people took the horses from the carriage and drew the hero to the Mansion House, where the sailors took him on their shoulders and carried him in.

Scarcely had the *Essex* disappeared below the horizon, December 12, 1813, when the savages on the island of Nukahiva became troublesome and showed signs of hostility, and at last Lieutenant John M. Gamble found it necessary to land and overpower them. On the 28th of February, 1814, one of the marines, John Wetter, was drowned, which reduced their force to twenty-one, all told, and a week afterward four of the men seized a whaleboat and deserted. On the 12th of April, two weeks after the capture of the *Essex* at Valparaiso, Lieutenant Gamble rigged the *Seringapatam* and the *Sir Andrew Hammond*, with the intention of burning the *Greenwich* and leaving his lonely prison; but by this time the survivors had become mutinous, and as a precaution against them all the arms were collected in the *Greenwich*. On the 7th of May Lieutenant Gamble had occasion to go aboard the *Seringapatam*, when six mutineers rose upon him, wounded him in the foot with a pistol-shot, and, having placed him in a canoe, sailed away with the ship, thus reducing the number of survivors on the island to eight. On the 9th of May the savages made a fierce assault, and in repelling them Midshipman William W. Feltus was killed and three of the other Americans were wounded, and on the follow-

ing night the wretched survivors put to sea in the *Sir Andrew Hammond*. When day broke it was found that there were but four able men in the ship, Lieutenant Gamble included, only six cartridges left, and not a shot to be found. After seventeen anxious days they reached the Sandwich Islands, where they were captured by the *Cherub*, and in this ship they remained seven months longer; they finally reached New York, *via* Rio de Janeiro, late in August, 1815, having been absent two years and ten months.

In his cruise of seventeen months Captain Porter proved himself to be an officer of great ability. During the long period the *Essex* kept the sea he had not drawn a dollar from the national treasury; he had captured four thousand tons of shipping, captured or recaptured nearly four hundred prisoners, and annihilated British commerce in that part of the globe. Nor was this all: for, had the *Essex* failed to appear in the Pacific, many American whalers, which had not even heard of the declaration of war—as whalers kept the sea from one to four years at a time—would have been taken or destroyed by the British privateers that Captain Porter seized. The timely warning given by the *Essex* enabled them to secure places of safety, so that only one was captured.

From a pecuniary point of view, also, this was a most successful cruise. The pay of our naval officers and seamen at that time was inadequate, so that prize money was a very considerable item. The pay table was as follows: For a captain of a squadron, $1,200; for a captain of a ship mounting more than thirty-two guns, $1,200; for a captain of a ship carrying thirty-two guns or less, $900; for a master-commandant, $720; for a lieutenant in command, $600; for a lieutenant, $480; for a surgeon, $600; for sailing-masters, pursers and chaplains, $400; for surgeon's mate, $360; for boatswains, gunners, sailmakers and carpenters, $240; for midshipmen, $228. The pay for officers in our navy

to-day is: Rear-admirals, $6,000; commodores, $5,000; captains, $4,500; commanders, $3,500; lieutenant-commanders (first four years), $2,800; (after four years), $3,000; lieutenants, $1,800 to $2,600; ensigns, $1,200 to $1,400; naval cadets, $500 to $950; paymasters, surgeons and engineers, $1,700 to $4,400; chaplains, $2,500 to $2,800; boatswains, gunners, carpenters and sailmakers, $1,200 to $1,800; the maximum pay of the boatswains, carpenters, etc., being fifty per cent greater than a "captain of a squadron" got early in the century. But even our modern pay table is far short of the sum paid by almost every European naval power, and is entirely inadequate to meet the heavy expenses to which our officers are necessarily subjected.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NAVAL WAR IN 1814.

By 1814 the enemy had stationed nearly a hundred line-of-battle ships and frigates of the largest class on the coast of the United States, which made it exceedingly hazardous for our cruisers to get to sea, and almost impossible to send in prizes. No feature of the naval War of 1812 brings out in stronger light the skill and daring of the American commanders than the manner in which they put to sea in the face of English squadrons. Under the law of 1812 the corvette *Adams*, which had been blockaded in the Potomac, was altered to a sloop of war, and lengthened so as to carry twenty-six guns. Tiring of the inglorious blockade, her commander, Captain Charles Morris, who had been first lieutenant in the *Constitution* during her action with the *Guerrière*, and had been promoted for gallantry on that occasion, determined to run the blockade, and on the night of January 18th, which came on cloudy, boisterous and with frequent snow squalls, he got under way with a strong northwest wind. In order to pass the British ships at Hampton Roads before daylight it was necessary for the *Adams* to maintain a high rate of speed all night, and as the beacon lights in the bay had been removed (for the further annoyance of the enemy) this was a feat involving no little danger. Hardly was she well under way when Captain Morris found that the two men whom he had engaged as pilots were not equal to their task, for they soon lost their bearings and differed in opinion as to the whereabouts of the corvette and the direction in which she was head-

ing. The *Adams* was blindly rushing through the water at twelve knots an hour, and this speed made it impossible to obtain correct soundings. About eleven o'clock a light suddenly appeared directly ahead, and to avoid running ashore the ship was sent about in the hope of getting into deeper water, but she ran into shoal water and struck ground several times. The heavy swells, however, lifted her over, and in a few minutes she again sounded deep water. Fearing that the corvette had sustained serious injury, Captain Morris called his lieutenants together for consultation. The officers, wrapped in their greatcoats, assembled aft, and in the flickering light of a ship's lantern and amid flurries of snow they held a midnight council of war. The unanimous opinion was that, in spite of the perils of the situation, it was better to continue in the attempt to run the blockade than to remain in a monotonous imprisonment, and accordingly the ship was again put under sail, and soon she was bowling down the bay at the rate of twelve and a half knots an hour. About one o'clock in the morning she passed Lynnhaven, where two of the British ships were just distinguishable in the darkness, but they evidently did not discover the *Adams*, and she passed out to sea.

Following the suggestion of the Secretary of the Navy, Captain Morris headed eastward, with the view of cruising near the Canary and Cape de Verde Islands. On the 25th of March he captured the Indiaman *Woodbridge*, but while he was taking possession of her two British frigates hove in sight and compelled him to abandon his prize. Cruising along the western coast of Africa, from Cape Mount to Cape Palmas, he took three brigs—one laden with wine and fruit, one with fish, and one with palm oil and ivory. The first two were destroyed, and the third, having been relieved of her cargo, was given up to her master, and the prisoners being released on parole were put aboard her. Captain Morris then sailed westward and ran into Savannah for

supplies. Sailing again on the 8th of May, he came across a Jamaica convoy near the Matanilla Reef, but finding the escort too heavy he sheered off, after which he shaped his course northeast, and on the 3d of July made the coast of Ireland. On the 4th of July, off the mouth of the river Shannon, the *Adams* was chased by the British frigate *Tigris*, and before sunset the enemy had proved herself to be the better sailer of the two and was almost within gunshot. In the night it fell calm, and Captain Morris, who had materially aided in the escape of the *Constitution* from Captain Broke's squadron (July, 1812), ordered his boats out under the command of First-Lieutenant Alexander Scammel Wadsworth, who also had been in the *Constitution* under Captain Hull, and began towing, so that by morning the enemy was six miles astern. This lead enabled the *Adams* to make her escape, although she was compelled to sacrifice her anchors and some guns that had been taken from prizes.

On the 19th of July the *Adams* was chased by two frigates, one of which for forty hours was just out of gunshot, in which time the vessels covered four hundred miles without perceptibly increasing or diminishing the distance between them. On the second night of the chase Captain Morris took advantage of a squall, and by changing his course lost sight of the enemy.

After these narrow escapes the *Adams* made for America. Approaching Newfoundland she experienced continuously moist weather, which, together with the lack of fresh provisions, brought on scurvy, so that by the 25th of July several of the men died from it, thirty were unfit for duty, and the entire ship's company was affected. By the 16th of August the sick list was increased to fifty-eight, and Captain Morris found it imperative to return to the nearest American port, and changed his course for the coast of Maine. At four o'clock on the morning of August 17th, while the *Adams* was making from ten to eleven knots an hour in a dense

fog, the lookout announced breakers ahead, and a moment later the ship ran upon a ledge of rocks. Notwithstanding the speed at which she was rushing through the water, the shock was not severe, but, fearing the worst, Captain Morris released the prisoners in the hold. It was found that the ship was resting on a slippery rock, and that she had been raised six feet, and on the following morning, when the sun dispelled the fog, a towering cliff was seen rising out of the water less than a hundred yards ahead. On the return of flood tide the ship was floated off, and on manning the pumps it was found that the leaks were not serious. Being ignorant of the coast, Captain Morris determined to put to sea again, and on the same day he discovered that he was near Mount Desert, instead of being near Portland, as he had supposed. At this moment the English 16-gun brig-sloop *Rifleman* hove in sight, and the *Adams* gave chase, but the heavy pressure of sail caused the ship to leak so seriously that Captain Morris was compelled to abandon the pursuit, and the *Rifleman* escaped and brought the news of the presence of the *Adams* in these waters to a British squadron that was assembling, under the command of Admiral Griffith, for the purpose of making an attack on Machias. Hearing that the *Adams* had retreated up the Penobscot, the British land and naval force followed and destroyed her near Hampden. But Captain Morris and his officers and crew escaped to the shore, and, breaking up into small parties, marched by different routes to Portland.

In this cruise of more than seven months Captain Morris captured ten merchantmen, carrying in all one hundred and sixty-one guns. The officers of the *Adams*, besides the captain, were Alexander Scammel Wadsworth, John R. Madison, Foxhall A. Parker, Thomas A. Beatty, lieutenants; Samuel E. Watson, lieutenant of marines; William S. Rogers, purser; Gerard Dayers, surgeon, and William Williamson,

assistant surgeon; and G. B. McCulloch, sailing-master.

Soon after this Captain Morris was ordered to command the 36-gun frigate *Congress*, then in Piscataqua, some miles above Portsmouth, but peace was declared before he could get to sea.

On the 29th of January, when the small schooner *Alligator*, Sailing-Master Basset, was lying abreast of Cole's Island, a British frigate appeared outside the breakers, and, anticipating a boat attack in the night, Mr. Basset made dispositions for a sturdy defense. At 7.30 P. M. six boats were discovered pulling with muffled oars toward the schooner, and on being hailed, the boat party discharged a musket, upon which the Americans opened with grape and musketry. Availing himself of a light breeze, Mr. Basset cut his cables and managed to prevent the boats from coming alongside, but at the same time he held them within reach of his musketry. The *Alligator* soon grounded, but fortunately the English withdrew before they learned of the mishap. The American loss was two killed and two wounded, one of the latter being the pilot, Robert Hatch; that of the enemy was much greater. Mr. Basset was promoted for his gallantry on this occasion. On the following 1st of July, this little schooner, while lying in Port Royal Sound, in South Carolina, was capsized, carrying down with her twenty-one men, among whom were Midshipmen Joseph Brailesford and Robert Rogerson. The schooner was subsequently raised. On February 22d the schooner *Ferret*, Lieutenant Lawrence Kearny, was wrecked on the breakers of Stono Inlet, but all her people were saved. In June, while stationed off Charleston, in command of the schooner *Nonsuch*, Lieutenant Kearny was chased by a frigate, and only escaped capture by throwing overboard eleven guns.

The *Constitution*, since her action with the *Java*, had been blockaded in Boston, but on the 1st of January, 1814, she eluded the British squadron and got to

sea. Captain Stewart ran down to the West Indies, where he fell in with the British 36-gun frigate *Pique*, but in the night the enemy succeeded in effecting his escape by running through Mona Passage. Having captured the English 14-gun schooner *Picton*, Captain Stewart made for port, and while approaching Boston he was chased into Marblehead by the British frigates *Tenedos* and *Junon*, but from that place he soon afterward ran to Boston. In this cruise the *Constitution* captured four prizes, aggregating twenty-four guns and seventy-six men.

After the lamented death of Lieutenant Burrows the command of the *Enterprise* was intrusted to Lieutenant James Renshaw, and in the winter of 1813–'14 this brig, in company with the *Rattlesnake*, Master-Commandant John O. Creighton, made an extended cruise southward, during which the *Enterprise* was three times chased by a superior force, but she succeeded in making her escape. While off the coast of Florida Lieutenant Renshaw overhauled the English privateer *Mars*, of fourteen guns, half the crew of which, as soon as the *Enterprise* was known to be a war vessel, took to the boats and made for the land. Ignorant of the stranger's force, Lieutenant Renshaw ranged alongside and poured in a broadside, which induced the enemy to strike, he having sustained a loss of four men killed or wounded. On the 25th of April the *Rattlesnake* and the *Enterprise*, being pursued by an English frigate, separated. The enemy made after the *Enterprise*, and for seventy hours held her in chase, frequently getting within gunshot. On the morning of the 27th, just as the enemy was again at long range, it fell calm, whereupon Lieutenant Renshaw sent his boats ahead and towed his vessel out of gunshot. About two hours afterward a breeze sprang up, which placed the *Enterprise* to the windward, and, making the most of this favorable circumstance, she succeeded in running her pursuer out of sight. In this exciting chase the *Enter-*

prise lost all but one of her guns. On returning to the United States Lieutenant Renshaw was transferred to the *Rattlesnake*, while the *Enterprise* was sent to Charleston to act as a coast guard, in which service she was employed for the remainder of the war.

The *Rattlesnake* soon got to sea again, and while cruising in latitude 40° North, longitude 33° West, she was chased by a British frigate, and only escaped by the sacrifice of all but two of her guns. On the 22d of June, while near Cape Sable, she fell in with the British 50-gun ship *Leander*, and being between land and her powerful foe, she was captured, although Lieutenant Renshaw kept his colors flying until the enemy was hulling him at every shot. In this cruise the *Rattlesnake* took eight prizes.

Of the six new sloops ordered by Congress, January 2, 1813, the *Frolic*, Master-Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, was the first to get to sea. Sailing from Portsmouth, N. H., she made for the West Indies, and at daylight on the 20th of April, while fifteen miles northwest of Matanzas, Cuba,[1] she fell in with the 36-gun frigate *Orpheus*, Captain H. Pigot, and the 12-gun schooner *Shelburne*. After a chase of sixty miles, during which the *Frolic* threw overboard all her guns, shot and every other heavy article, she was captured.[2]

In the summer of 1813 Captain Joshua Barney,

[1] Official report of Captain Pigot.

[2] In reference to this surrender James says: "We should not have hesitated to call a French or even a British captain, who had acted as Master-Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, of the United States navy, did in this instance, a ——." Taking James at his word, we turn to volume ii, pages 354, 355, and find him referring to the French privateer *Bordelais* as an extraordinarily fine ship of twenty-four guns, striking her colors to a British 46-gun frigate "without, as it appears, making any resistance"—certainly without provoking any comment from James. Again, at page 95, volume i, he speaks of the British 24-gun ship *Hyæna* surrendering to a French squadron, but in James' first edition, by a mistake, it was represented to have been made to a 44-gun frigate—a mistake, however, which did not provoke the application of any expressive blank to the British commander.

famous in the Revolution for the *Hyder Ally* and *General Monk* affair, was requested to take command of the flotilla of gunboats then fitting out at Baltimore for the defense of Chesapeake Bay and its tributary waters. The work of building the boats occupied the summer of 1813 and the following winter, and on the 1st of June, 1814, Captain Barney left the Patuxent with the sloop *Scorpion*, two gunboats, and several barges, in pursuit of two British schooners. As the wind was light the Americans, by making a free use of their sweeps, were fast overhauling the chase, when a strong breeze sprang up from the south, and, as gunboats were useless in rough water, Captain Barney signaled a retreat. The English turned upon their pursuers and threatened to cut off one of the gunboats, upon which the *Scorpion* and several barges put back, and after exchanging a few shot drove off the schooners. The flotilla then anchored three miles up the river. On the 7th of June, the enemy having been re-enforced by a razee and a sloop of war, Captain Barney moved up the Patuxent to the mouth of St. Leonard Creek. On the morning of the 8th, a frigate, a brig, two schooners and fifteen barges were observed moving up the Patuxent, apparently for the purpose of attacking the flotilla. Captain Barney retreated two miles up St. Leonard Creek, where the larger English vessels could not follow him, and anchored his flotilla in a line across the stream. By 8 A. M. the enemy reached the creek, where the frigate, brig and schooners anchored, while their barges were manned and sent up the creek to attack the flotilla. At the head of their line was a large boat from which they discharged Congreve rockets. Captain Barney put all his men in his thirteen barges and dropped down to meet them, but, without awaiting the attack, the British barges retreated to their ships. In the afternoon they again advanced, with the same result. On the afternoon of the 9th they once more entered the creek, this time with twenty barges and a

strong re-enforcement of men, but after a sharp skirmish they retreated for the third time. On the 11th, twenty-one barges, with two schooners in tow, advanced to a fourth attack. Captain Barney's entire available force was his thirteen barges; his sloops and two gunboats, being unmanageable in the shallow water, had been left farther up the creek. After another sharp fight the British were again compelled to retreat, and the Americans pursued them until they were under cover of their frigate.

By this time batteries had been erected along the shores of the creek and manned by a considerable body of militia under Colonel Wadsworth. Captain Samuel Miller, of the marines, also joined the flotilla. On the 26th of June Captain Barney, learning that only two of the English vessels—the 38-gun frigate *Loire* and the 32-gun frigate *Narcissus*—were stationed at the mouth of St. Leonard Creek, moved down with his flotilla to attack, and after a vigorous cannonade of two hours the British frigates were compelled to retreat. In this spirited affair the Americans lost two barges, and thirteen of their number were killed or wounded. The *Loire* received several dangerous shot in her hull, but, owing to the protection her sides afforded, she did not lose a man. Soon after this the British left the Patuxent and began a series of outrages on the inhabitants of the surrounding country which has left an indelible stain on the pages of English history. In August the enemy renewed their attacks on Captain Barney's flotilla, both with a view of destroying it and as affording a pretext for sending forward large bodies of troops, their real design being an attack on Washington. In accordance with instructions he had received from Washington, Captain Barney, on the 22d of August, burned his flotilla, hastened with all his men to aid in the defense of the capital, and took quarters in the marine barracks. During the English attack on that city his men conducted themselves with com-

mendable steadiness, and for this service he received a sword from the city of Washington.

By the capture of Washington the navy lost the 44-gun frigate *Columbia* and the 18-gun sloop *Argus*, both of which were burned on the stocks, besides which the condemned *Boston* and all the naval stores there collected were destroyed. It is remarkable that the British, in all their incursions on our territory, succeeded in destroying only two of the national cruisers. Strenuous exertions were made by Captain Rodgers with the crew of the new 44-gun frigate *Guerrière*, assisted by Lieutenants Henry S. Newcomb, James Ramage, Forrest and Robert Field Stockton, at Philadelphia; by Captain Perry, of the new 44-gun frigate *Java*, at Baltimore; and by Captain Porter, to intercept the British vessels in their retreat. But such was the haste of the enemy that the necessary guns and ammunition could not be procured in time. Several skirmishes resulted from these efforts, and various attempts were made with fire-ships, but with no important result.

In September the British made an attack on Baltimore, but were repelled. On this occasion the American seamen rendered invaluable service. Eighty men of the *Guerrière*, under Lieutenant H. S. Newcomb, manned Fort Covington, while Sailing-Master Webster, with fifty men of the flotilla, worked the 6-gun battery Babcock with creditable steadiness and skill. The barges, under Midshipman Solomon Rutter, won much applause for the manner in which they repelled the enemy's assaults. Captain Spence also distinguished himself in this affair.

On the 12th of June the boats of the 32-gun frigate *Narcissus*, Captain John R. Lumley, under the command of Lieutenant John Criric, with Lieutenant of Marines Patrick Savage, were sent up York River to attack the United States schooner *Surveyor*, mounting six 12-pound carronades and having on board only sixteen men. The vessel was boarded and carried in the

face of a severe fire of musketry, but at a loss to the British of three men killed and six wounded. The defense of the American vessel was so gallant that Lieutenant Cririe returned the American commander's sword, paying him many compliments.

About three o'clock on the morning of October 6, 1814, Sailing-Master Paine, while convoying some coasting vessels from Savannah to St. Mary's in gunboat No. 160, was attacked in St. Andrew's Sound by a tender and ten boats. Mr. Paine had only sixteen men of his crew of thirty fit for duty, and was overpowered after a stubborn defense in which he and two of his crew were badly wounded. While in command at North Edisto, January, 1815, Captain John H. Dent ordered Lieutenant Lawrence Kearny to take three barges and attack a party of English officers and men who had come ashore from the British cruiser *Cerberus*, Captain Palmer, for the purpose of getting a supply of water. The Americans made a dash at the enemy, and, notwithstanding a galling fire from the cruiser, they captured the tender, which was armed with a carronade and six brass swivels, and a launch, which were taken into South Edisto. About forty prisoners were made. A man who was standing beside Lieutenant Kearny had his head taken off by one of the *Cerberus*' round shot. Shortly after this Lieutenant Kearny put out in the captured launch with twenty-five men, and carried off a tender belonging to the cruiser *Severn* with about thirty-five men.

The second of the six new sloops to get to sea was the *Peacock*, Master-Commandant Lewis Warrington. Sailing from New York on the 12th of March, the *Peacock* went as far south as the Great Isaacs, and then skirted along the coast of Florida to Cape Canaveral. On Friday morning, April 29th, in latitude 27° 47′ North, longitude 80° 9′ West, three merchant ships and a large brig of war were descried to windward. On making out the *Peacock*, the merchantmen drew away,

while their escort bore down to reconnoiter. The *Peacock* then showed English colors and allowed the stranger to approach, and at 9 A. M. the brig signaled the merchant vessels, and soon afterward they were hurrying away in different directions. In the meantime the *Peacock* was rapidly nearing her foe, and at 9.40 A. M. she hauled down the English colors and ran up her own. By 10 A. M. the vessels were within half gunshot, but neither of them had opened fire. Master-Commandant Warrington now manœuvred to secure a raking position, but the enemy avoided this by putting up his helm until close on the *Peacock's* bow, when, hauling up to the wind, he fired his starboard broadside, and the Americans replied with their port battery. At the first fire the *Peacock* received two 32-pound shot in the quarter of her foreyard, which disabled the fore and fore-topsail for the remainder of the action. This mishap compelled Master-Commandant Warrington to forego manœuvring and to rely entirely on his gunnery. Orders were now given to load with star and bar shot, with a view to crippling the enemy's rigging, so that he could not profit by the *Peacock's* disabled foreyard. In a few minutes the American foreyard gave way and the antagonists drew closer, which rendered their fire very destructive. About 10.40 A. M. the enemy lost his head sails, and at the same time his main boom, having been shot through, fell upon the wheel. This brought the wind on his beam, exposing him to a raking fire from the *Peacock*, but the latter had too much headway to avail herself of the advantage except by throwing in two or three shot. Then hauling close under his opponent's lee, Master-Commandant Warrington poured in a hot fire, which was chiefly directed at the enemy's hull, and soon her main topmast went over. At 11 A. M. she attempted to wear around so as to bring a fresh broadside to bear, and this brought the vessels so close that the British commander was heard urging his men to attempt

boarding; but, says James, "the British crew declined a measure so fraught with danger." The battle had now lasted forty-five minutes, and the brig struck. On being boarded, the stranger was found to be the British brig-sloop *Éperrier*, Captain Richard Wales.

The *Peacock*, like all the new sloops, mounted twenty short 32-pounders and two long 12-pounders,[1] making twenty-two guns and three hundred and nine pounds to the broadside. The *Éperrier*, according to James, mounted sixteen short 32-pounders and two short 18-pounders, making a total of eighteen guns and two hundred and seventy-four pounds to the broadside. Out of her crew of one hundred and sixty men the *Peacock* had but two wounded, while of the *Éperrier's* crew, which numbered one hundred and twenty-eight, eight were killed, including First-Lieutenant Hackett, and fifteen wounded.[2] During this brilliant action the *Peacock* did not receive a shot in her hull, the only considerable injury being that to her foreyard. "In fifteen minutes after the enemy struck," wrote Master Commandant Warrington, "the *Peacock* was ready for another action in every respect but her foreyard, which was sent down, fished, and had the foresail set again in forty-five minutes." The *Éperrier* was cut to pieces, there being but one gun that was not disabled on the engaged side, while five feet of water was in her hold. Her fore rigging, stays and main boom were shot away, her bowsprit badly wounded, and her foremast cut nearly in two and left tottering, while her main topmast was over the side. Her hull was pierced with forty-five shot holes on the port side, twenty of which were within a foot of the water line. The one hundred and twenty thousand dollars in specie found in her was removed to the *Peacock*. Every

[1] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 58.

[2] Official report of Master-Commandant Warrington; also James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 160.

exertion was now made to keep the prize afloat, and by sunset the most dangerous shot holes were plugged and the brig put under sail.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Peacock:	22	309	160	0	2	2	Time
Épervier:	18	274	128	8	15	23	45m.

Master-Commandant Warrington wrote: "The *Épervier* is one of their finest brigs, and is well calculated for our service. She sails extremely well." She was built in 1812, and it is said that when she left London "the betting was three to one that she would take an American sloop of war or a small frigate." Both vessels were of the same measurements, except that the *Épervier* was eleven feet shorter.

This action adds another to the long list of instances in which American gunnery proved its superiority over that of the English. It hardly seems credible that in a hotly contested action of forty-five minutes, at close quarters and in smooth water, there could have been such a vast difference in damage between vessels both of which sought an engagement, yet such difference is admitted on both sides. These vessels were admirably matched, there being only thirty-five pounds in favor of the *Peacock's* broadside. The *Épervier's* gunnery must have been execrable, while the *Peacock* fired with wonderful accuracy. Master-Commandant Warrington wrote that the fire from the divisions commanded by Second-Lieutenant Henly and Midshipman Philip F. Voorhees was terrible, and was directed with the greatest precision and coolness. Sir Edward Codrington, in a private letter, speaking of this affair, says: "It seems that the *Peacock*, American sloop of war, of what size I know not, has taken our *Épervier*. But the worst part of our story is, that our sloop was cut to pieces, and the other scarcely scratched! I do not know the captain or his character

in the service; but I well know that the system of favoritism and borough influence prevails so very much that many people are promoted and kept in commands that should be dismissed from the service. And while such is the case, the few Americans chosen for their merit may be expected to follow up their successes, except where they meet with our best officers on equal terms. It is said that that fellow ——'s people showed no spirit until he was wounded and carried below. Something of the same sort attaches to the name of Captain ——, whose ship did not do as well as her reputed discipline promised."

The *Épervier* was placed under the command of Lieutenant John B. Nicholson, first lieutenant of the *Peacock*, with orders to make for the nearest American port, and, knowing that the coast was swarming with British cruisers, Master-Commandant Warrington determined to accompany his prize. On the afternoon of the following day—April 30th—when the two vessels were abreast of Amelia Island, a frigate was discovered bearing down on them. At the request of Lieutenant Nicholson, whose vessel was nearest to the enemy, the captured crew of the *Épervier* was transferred to the *Peacock*, while he with sixteen men remained in the brig. The *Épervier* then steered southward close inshore, with the intention of making St. Mary's, while the *Peacock* stood temptingly out to sea, across the frigate's course. By this plan it was hoped to draw the enemy in chase of the swift-sailing *Peacock*, thus enabling the crippled *Épervier* to escape. The *ruse* was successful, and on the following day the *Peacock*, having lured the enemy far enough away from the *Épervier*, put on more sail and soon left the British commander to soliloquize at his leisure on the "singular ingenuity of these people," as Captain Symond, of the English navy, expressed it. While endeavoring to reach Savannah, the *Épervier* fell in with another frigate, and as the wind was light the enemy manned

his boats and sent them against her. The situation of the brig was now critical, for Lieutenant Nicholson had but sixteen men with whom to repel the attack. Owing to this deficiency in numbers a stratagem was resorted to. Waiting until the British boats were quite near, he suddenly ran out his guns, and, using his trumpet as if his vessel was full of men, gave the order to yaw and fire a broadside. This unexpected readiness to fight induced the boats to postpone the attack until re-enforcements came up; but while they were waiting for this a breeze sprang up and carried the *Épervier* out of danger before the frigate could pick up her boats. On the 1st of May the *Épervier* reached Savannah, and three days later the *Peacock* arrived. Congress voted Master-Commandant Warrington a gold medal, to each of his officers a silver one, and to each of the midshipmen and sailing-masters a sword. The colors of the *Épervier* are preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis. Lieutenant Nicholson spoke in high terms of the conduct of Midshipmen Thomas Greener and Rodgers, who were in the prize with him. The *Épervier* was sold for fifty-five thousand dollars.

On the 4th of June the *Peacock* sailed on another cruise against the enemy. Running across the Grand Banks, she stationed herself in St. George's Channel, off the coast of Ireland, where she captured several valuable prizes and caused great anxiety among British merchants. In order to elude his numerous pursuers, Master Commandant Warrington changed his cruising ground to the Bay of Biscay and the coast of Portugal, but not meeting an enemy of equal force he stood across the Atlantic, and on the 29th of October arrived in New York. In this cruise of one hundred and forty-seven days the *Peacock* captured fourteen merchant vessels, valued at four hundred and ninety-three thousand dollars, together with one hundred and fifty men.

After bringing the *Épervier* into Savannah Lieutenant Nicholson was transferred to the 16-gun brig *Siren*. After the war broke out this brig, under the command of Master-Commandant Joseph Bainbridge, cruised a short time in the Gulf of Mexico, and then came north to Boston, when Bainbridge was placed in command of the *Frolic*, while George Parker, who had been first lieutenant in the *Constitution* during her action with the *Java*, was put in command of the *Siren*. Early in June the *Siren* sailed from Boston in company with the privateer *Grand Turk*, with orders to cruise off the coast of Africa. When the ship was off the Canary Islands Captain Parker died, and his body was committed to the deep; but scarcely had the ship got under way again when his coffin, which was improperly constructed, was seen floating on the surface of the ocean. Lieutenant Nicholson, who succeeded to the command of the *Siren*, being undecided as to what course to take, called the men together and asked whether they desired to continue the cruise under his command or to return to port. With three hearty cheers they expressed their desire to continue the cruise, and returned to their quarters. The *Siren* approached the African coast during the night and descried a large sail, but was unable to make out whether it was a vessel of war or a merchantman. While she was cautiously approaching, the stranger suddenly set all sail and gave chase. She proved to be a British frigate, and Lieutenant Nicholson made sail to escape. By hanging out false lights on floating casks, and extinguishing his own lights and altering his course, he baffled his pursuer, and by daybreak the enemy was nowhere to be seen. A few days afterward, while passing an English vessel in the Senegal River, the *Siren* hailed, and on receiving an insolent reply poured in a broadside. But the current separated the ships, and while Nicholson was attempting to beat up the stream again the fort opened such a heavy fire that

it became necessary to abandon the attack. After capturing and destroying the English ships *Barton* and *Adventure*, the *Siren*, on the 12th of July, fell in with the English 74-gun ship of the line *Medway*, Captain Augustus Brine, and after a chase of eleven hours, in which all the *Siren's* guns, cables and shot were thrown overboard, she was overtaken, and both vessels sailed for the Cape of Good Hope.

The *Wasp*, Master-Commandant Johnston Blakeley, was the third of the new sloops to get to sea. Sailing from Portsmouth, N. H., on the 1st of May, she made directly for the English Channel, where so many of our cruisers had operated with success. At 4.15 A. M. on June 28th, while the ship was in latitude 48° 36′ North, longitude 11° 15′ West, and the weather was cloudy with a light breeze from the northeast, two sails were descried about three points off the lee beam, and as the *Wasp* was carrying all sail for the stranger a third vessel appeared off the weather beam. Master-Commandant Blakeley immediately changed his course to reconnoiter the latter, and by 10 A. M. she hoisted English colors and a private signal, diagonal yellow and blue. At 12.30 P. M. she gave another signal, diagonal blue and white, at the foremast, and fired a gun; but as Blakeley did not recognize these he cleared for battle. A little after 1.15 P. M. the *Wasp* changed her course so as to weather the enemy, but the latter frustrated this by tacking also, and finding that he would not gain this advantage, Master-Commandant Blakeley, at 1.50 P. M., signified his readiness to begin the action by hoisting his colors and firing a gun to windward. The stranger promptly accepted the challenge and bore down to engage. At 3.15 P. M.[1] the Englishman, being sixty yards off the *Wasp's* port and weather quarter, opened fire with a boat carronade from her forecastle. After receiving the fire of this gun five times without

[1] Log of the *Wasp*.

replying, the *Wasp*, at 3.26 P. M., put her helm down, luffed up, and opened with her after carronades. After ten minutes' steady fire the enemy's rigging was seen to be cut to pieces, and five minutes later his bowsprit fouled the *Wasp's* port quarter. Master-Commandant Blakeley then poured in a heavy raking broadside, which swept the enemy's decks fore and aft, the American sharpshooters in the meantime picking off the British officers whenever they showed themselves on deck. Finding that his ship was fast becoming a wreck, the British commander called upon his crew to board, and while gallantly leading them he was killed by two bullets from the marksmen in the *Wasp's* maintop. Having easily repelled the boarders, Blakeley called upon his men to board, which was done with but feeble resistance on the part of the British, and at 3.45 P. M.—nineteen minutes from the time the *Wasp* opened fire—the British flag was lowered. The prize was found to be the English brig sloop *Reindeer*, Captain R. William Manners.

The *Wasp* carried the same armament as the *Peacock*—twenty short 32-pounders and two long 12-pounders, making a total of twenty-two guns and three hundred and nine pounds weight of metal to the broadside. The *Reindeer*, a sister ship to the *Épervier*, carried sixteen short 24-pounders, two short 6-pounders and one short 12-pounder—in all nineteen guns and two hundred and four pounds of metal to the broadside. Out of her crew of one hundred and seventy-three the *Wasp* lost eleven killed and fifteen wounded, Midshipmen Henry S. Langdon, Jr., and Frank Toscan dying two months later from their wounds. The *Reindeer's* crew numbered one hundred and eighteen, of whom twenty-five were killed and forty two wounded, Captain Manners among the former. One of the Englishmen had a ramrod fired into his head, and before it could be extracted it was sawed off close to the skull. The man recovered. First-Lieutenant Richard Jones,

Lieutenant Thomas Chambers and Master's-Mate Matthew Mitchell were wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Wasp:	22	309	173	11	15	26	Time
Reindeer:	19	204	118	25	42	67	19m.

An English writer says: "In a line with her ports the *Reindeer* was literally cut to pieces, her upper works, boats and spare spars were one complete wreck. Her masts were both badly wounded, particularly her foremast, which was left in a tottering state," and on the following day, in spite of all efforts, it went by the board. Finding his prize too shattered to keep afloat, Master-Commandant Blakeley blew her up. The *Wasp* did not escape with the little injury that was generally the lot of American cruisers in this war, but as compared with her antagonist she fared extremely well. Six round shot and many grape struck her hull, one 24-pound ball went through the center of her foremast, and the rigging was somewhat damaged. This action reflects most creditably on Blakeley, not only for the masterly handling of his ship but for the magnificent discipline pervading the entire company. We have seen how the men quietly stood by their guns full eleven minutes without flinching, while the enemy deliberately fired upon them at close range; but when the order was given the rapidity and precision of their gunnery, as seen in the results, was wonderful, clearly showing that they had been long and carefully trained. First and Third Lieutenants James Reilly and Frederick Baury, who were engaged also in the action with the *Guerrière* and the *Java*, conducted themselves with great gallantry, and the same was said of Second-Lieutenant T. G. Tillinghast, who served as second lieutenant in the *Enterprise* during her action with the *Boxer*. On the other hand, Captain Manners was deserving of much credit for his personal gallantry and good discipline in

the *Reindeer*. James says: "The British crew had long served together, and were called the pride of Plymouth." Manners was first wounded in the calf of his leg, and soon afterward a canister shot passed through both his thighs, but he refused to be taken below. Finally two musket balls crashed through his skull, and, placing one hand on his forehead and with the other convulsively brandishing his sword, he exclaimed, "O God!" and dropped lifeless on his own deck. The London Times, commenting on this action, says: "It seems fated that the ignorance, incapacity and cowardice of the Americans by land should be continually relieved in point of effect on the public mind by their successes at sea. To the list of their captures, which we can never peruse without the most painful emotions, is now to be added that of his Majesty's ship *Reindeer*, taken after a short but most desperate action by the United States sloop of war *Wasp*." The author of one of the best histories of the navy of Great Britain —Captain Brenton—has neglected to mention the action at all. For this brilliant affair Congress voted Master-Commandant Blakeley a gold medal, and to each of his officers a silver one; also a sword to each of the midshipmen and sailing-masters. The *Reindeer's* flag is now in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

After burning his prize and placing some of his wounded prisoners aboard a Portuguese vessel, Master-Commandant Blakeley made sail for L'Orient, where he arrived on the 8th of July. Remaining in port until the 27th of August, he again put to sea, on the 30th captured a brig, and on the following day took the merchant ship *Bon Accord*. On the morning of September 1st a squadron of ten sail was made out to leeward, and on closer inspection they proved to be merchantmen convoyed by a 74-gun ship of the line, the *Armada*, and a bomb vessel. As the ships were sailing in open order, the *Wasp* managed to cut out one of them, which proved to be the brig *Mary*, laden with

brass cannon taken from the Spaniards and stores from Gibraltar. Blakeley burned her, but on attempting to repeat his audacious attack he was driven off by the ship of the line.

About half past six o'clock that evening the *Wasp*, being in latitude 47° 30′ North, longitude 11° West, two sails were discovered off the starboard bow, and shortly afterward two more off the port, and all sail was immediately made to bring up with the first strangers. By 7 P. M. it was quite dark, and it could be seen that one of the vessels was making signals with lanterns and rockets, and an hour later Blakeley answered them with a blue light on his forecastle. By this time the ship that made the signals had separated from the others. Singling her out, the *Wasp* rapidly approached her, and at 8.38 P. M. the chase fired two shot from her stern guns, but still held on her course to the southwest. By 9.20 P. M. the *Wasp* had brought the stranger under her lee guns, when the chase hailed, "What ship is that?" Master-Commandant Blakeley replied by asking, "What brig is that?" The stranger responded, "His Majesty's brig ——." Owing to the strong breeze whistling through the rigging the name could not be made out. The chase then repeated his first hail, upon which Blakeley seized a trumpet and ordered her to heave to and she would know. The hail again came from the stranger and received the same reply. Sailing-Master James E. Carr now went to the forecastle and for the third time ordered the chase to heave to, but, instead of doing this, she set her port fore-topmast studding sails to escape.

At 9.29 P. M. Blakeley ordered a 12-pound bow gun to be fired, which drew a broadside from the chase. The *Wasp* then ran under her lee bow, to prevent her escape in the darkness, and opened with star and bar shot. This soon crippled the enemy in his rigging by cutting away the slings of the gaff, which, falling with the boom mainsail, covered the quarter-deck guns on

the port side. Seeing that the chase could not escape him, Blakeley loaded with round shot and fired at her hull, and the cannonading then became close and heavy on both sides. In a few minutes the enemy's mainmast fell by the board, leaving her unmanageable, and her fire then gradually slackened, while that from the *Wasp* was maintained with unabated vigor. By 10 P. M. the stranger's fire had ceased altogether, when Blakeley hailed to know if she had surrendered. As the only reply was a few straggling shot, the *Wasp* reopened her broadsides, and at 10.12 P. M., the enemy having been silent for some time, Blakeley again hailed. This time he received an answer in the affirmative, and the *Wasp* was about to lower a boat when suddenly another ship loomed up out of the darkness, just astern, and rapidly drew near. The boat was instantly ordered back, the men returned to their quarters, and every preparation was made to receive a second enemy, while the *Wasp* stood off to reconnoiter; but at 10.36 P. M. two more vessels were discovered standing toward the *Wasp*. As her braces had been cut away, the *Wasp* kept off the wind until new ones could be rove, and then stood away with the second stranger in chase. After exchanging a few shot, however, the latter hauled off to rejoin her consorts. Master-Commandant Blakeley then continued his cruise, not having been able to learn the name or fate of his opponent; but when last seen she was firing guns and making signals of distress. It was afterward known that the vessel that engaged the *Wasp* was the British 18-gun brig sloop *Avon*, Captain John James Arbuthnot, while the second vessel was the British 18-gun brig *Castilian*, Captain Brainer, and the other two were in her company. The *Avon* made repeated signals of distress, and the *Castilian* tacked and stood toward her. At 11.55 P. M. Captain Brainer was informed by Captain Arbuthnot that the *Avon* was sinking fast, upon which the *Castilian* immediately hoisted out her boats to

save the people; and at 1 A. M. on the 2d, just as the last boat had pushed off from the *Avon*, the British brig went down head foremost.

The *Wasp's* armament has just been given. The *Avon* mounted sixteen short 32-pounders and two long 6-pounders, making eighteen guns, with two hundred and sixty-two pounds of metal to a broadside, while her crew is given at one hundred and seventeen, of which number First-Lieutenant John Prendergast and nine men were killed, and her commander, Second-Lieutenant John Harvey, Midshipman John Travers and twenty-nine seamen were wounded. The *Wasp's* complement in this action or in her engagement with the *Reindeer* is not definitely known. In the first action it was approximated at one hundred and seventy-three, eleven of whom were killed and fifteen wounded. This would leave her at the time of her fight with the *Avon*, about one hundred and sixty-two, out of which number she lost two killed and one wounded.[1]

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Wasp:	22	309	163	2	1	3	Time
Avon:	18	262	117	10	32	42	43m.

In this night action the *Wasp* received only four round shot in her hull. Her foremast was peppered with grapeshot, while the only considerable injury she had sustained was in her rigging. Lieutenants James Reilly and T. Tillinghast and Midshipmen Frederick Baury were again highly commended by Master-Commandant Blakeley for their gallantry.

Johnston Blakeley and his gallant crew never ascertained the name of their foe, for the *Wasp* never returned to port. On the 12th of September she captured and scuttled the *Three Brothers*, on the 14th she destroyed the *Bacchus*, and on the 21st, being in

[1] Official report of Master-Commandant Blakeley.



The Wasp sinking the Avon.

latitude 33° 12′ North, longitude 14° 56′ West, she overhauled the *Atalanta*, of eight guns, making in all fifteen vessels, or two thousand eight hundred and sixty tons of shipping, valued at two hundred thousand dollars, captured by the *Wasp*. All but two of these merchantmen were destroyed at sea. The *Atalanta* (formerly the privateer *Siro*), of Baltimore, having a valuable cargo, was sent to the United States in charge of Midshipman David Geisinger and a prize crew, and arrived at Savannah in October. This is the last direct intelligence ever received from the *Wasp*. After many months of anxious waiting, a further gleam of light, from an unexpected quarter, was thrown upon the doom of this vessel. It will be remembered that on the capture of the *Essex* in the harbor of Valparaiso, the American officers were released on parole and were taken aboard the *Phœbe*. Among these officers were Acting-Lieutenant M'Knight and Mr. Lyman, master's mate. The *Phœbe*, having landed her prisoners at Rio de Janeiro, proceeded on her cruise, while the above-mentioned gentlemen, as the shortest way of reaching the United States, took passage in the Swedish bark *Adonis*, bound for England. Many months rolled by, but no tidings of Lieutenant M'Knight or his companion reached America. Their friends became anxious, and inquiries were set on foot, which revealed the following strange coincidence, while an extract from the log of the *Adonis* discloses the sad fate of these officers and gives us a last look at the ill-fated *Wasp*. "*August 23d.*—Left Rio de Janeiro: Stephen Decatur M'Knight and James Lyman, passengers for England. *October 9th.*—In latitude 18° 35′ North, longitude 30° 10′ West, sea account, at eight o'clock in the morning, discovered a strange sail giving chase to us and fired several guns, she gaining very fast. At half past ten o'clock hove to, and was boarded by an officer dressed in an English doctor's uniform; the vessel also hoisted an English ensign. The officer proceeded to examine

my ship's papers, etc., likewise the letter-bags, and took from one of them a letter to the victualing office, London. Finding I had two American officers as passengers, he immediately left the ship and went on board the sloop of war; he shortly afterward returned, took the American gentlemen with him, and went a second time on board the sloop. In about half an hour he returned again with Messrs. M'Knight and Lyman, and they informed me that the vessel was the United States sloop of war *Wasp*, commanded by Captain Blakeley, or Blake, last from France, where she had refitted; had lately sunk the *Reindeer*, English sloop of war, and another vessel, which sunk without their being able to save a single person or learn the vessel's name; that Messrs. M'Knight and Lyman had now determined to leave me, and go aboard the *Wasp*, paid me their passage in dollars, at 5*s*. 9*d*. (exchange), and, having taken their luggage on board the *Wasp*, they made sail to the southward. Shortly after they left I found that Lieutenant M'Knight had left his writing-desk behind, and I immediately made signal for the *Wasp* to return, and stood toward her; they, observing my signal, stood back, came alongside, and sent their boat aboard for the writing-desk; after which they sent me a log line and some other presents, and made all sail in a direction for the line, and, I have reason to suppose, for the convoy that passed on Thursday previous."

Many years have passed since the 9th of October, 1814, but no tidings, direct or indirect, have been received from the *Wasp*, and none ever can come until the sea shall give up its dead. The *Wasp* that took the *Frolic* in 1812, and afterward was captured by the British ship of the line *Poictiers* and was taken into the English service, also was supposed to have foundered at sea, not having been heard from since she left port for a cruise in the spring of 1814.

CHAPTER XIV.

BATTLES OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN AND LAKE BORGNE.

THE first abdication of Napoleon Bonaparte relieved England of immediate fear of her inveterate enemy, and enabled her to detail a large body of troops for service in America. Having lost the control of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario, the English turned their attention to Lake Champlain, which, with the Richelieu and Hudson Rivers, afforded an almost uninterrupted water course from Montreal to New York. The importance of this highway was seen early in the war, but as the Americans began hostilities by striking the Canadas on their western boundary, the control of the Great Lakes was of the first importance. Now the struggle for the control of Lake Champlain began in earnest.

At the beginning of the War of 1812 the Americans had two vessels on this lake, the sloops *Growler* and *Eagle*, carrying ten short 12-pounders and fifty men each, but on the 3d of June, 1813, while chasing an English gunboat, they were caught in a swift current at Isle-Aux-Noix and were captured, which gave the enemy undisputed control of Lake Champlain. With a view of recovering it, Master-Commandant Thomas Macdonough, the American commander on the lake, began the construction of the ship *Saratoga*, the schooner *Eagle* and several gunboats, in Otter Creek. At the same time the *Ticonderoga*, which had been designed for a steamboat, was altered and pierced for seventeen guns. The *Eagle* was launched nineteen days after her keel was laid.

Before these vessels could get to sea, Captain Pring,

the commander of the British naval forces on the lake, appeared off Otter Creek, May 14th, with eight galleys and a bomb sloop, and for an hour kept up a heavy fire. Macdonough, who had been informed of the intended attack, had landed the guns of his vessels and formed them in a battery, and succeeded in repelling the enemy. Soon afterward the American squadron sailed out of Otter Creek and anchored off Plattsburg. By August, 1814, the enemy had collected a formidable army of ten thousand to fifteen thousand men in Montreal, under the command of Sir George Prevost. The English naval force on the lake also had been increased by the construction of the brig *Linnet* and ten gunboats. Captain George Downie, a veteran officer of the British navy, arrived to assume command of the naval operations. By the middle of August Sir George Prevost crossed the frontier at the head of twelve thousand troops to attack Plattsburg. This place was defended by three thousand men, including Izard's invalids and the militia of New York and Vermont, under Brigadier-General Alexander Macomb. Sir George moved leisurely down Lake Champlain toward Plattsburg, driving General Macomb's skirmishers before him, and on the 3d of September Captain Downie appeared on the lake.

The American naval force on Lake Champlain at this time consisted of the *Saratoga* (flagship), mounting eight long 24-pounders, six short 42-pounders and twelve short 32-pounders; the *Eagle*, Lieutenant Robert Henley, eight long 18-pounders and twelve short 32-pounders; the *Ticonderoga*, Lieutenant Stephen Cassin, eight long 12-pounders, four long 18-pounders and five short 32-pounders; the *Preble*, Lieutenant Charles A. Budd, seven long 9-pounders; ten galleys, mounting six long 24-pounders, four long 12-pounders and six short 18-pounders; giving a total of eighty-six guns and (deducting seven per cent for deficiency in the weight of American shot) nineteen hundred and

four pounds of metal. The British squadron consisted of the *Confiance* (flagship), mounting thirty-one long 24-pounders and six short 32-pounders; the *Linnet*, Captain Daniel Pring, sixteen long 12-pounders; the *Chubb* (formerly the *Eagle*), Lieutenant McGhie, one long 6-pounder and ten short 18-pounders; the *Finch* (formerly the *Growler*), Lieutenant William Hicks, four long 6-pounders and seven short 18-pounders; and twelve gunboats, mounting three long 24-pounders, five long 18-pounders, eight short 32-pounders and one short 18-pounder; making a total of ninety-two guns with nineteen hundred pounds of metal.

About sunrise on the morning of September 11th the American guard boat announced the approach of the hostile squadron. Master-Commandant Macdonough, after assembling his crew on the main deck of the *Saratoga* for prayers, formed a double line of battle running north from Crab Island. The outer or eastern line—formed by the *Eagle*, the *Saratoga*, the *Ticonderoga* and the *Preble*—ran from shallow water off Crab Island to the shoals at Cumberland Head, which made it impossible for the British vessels of heavy draft to double either end. The second line, formed by the gunboats, was anchored about forty yards west of the first line. By this arrangement not only were the enemy prevented from flanking the American line, but the distance from Cumberland Head to Crab Island was so short, that Captain Downie could not draw out



Diagram of the battle, No. 1.

the full length of his line of battle unless he formed it outside of the bay, where he would be out of range, or inside, where all the American short guns could play with effect.

Just as eight bells was striking in the *Saratoga*, or shortly after 8 A. M., the upper sails of the British squadron were discovered moving along the eastern side of Cumberland Head, the intervening trees concealing their hulls and force. The first vessel that rounded the point and came into full view was the *Finch*, and she was followed by the others in quick succession, when the enemy hove to, waiting for his gunboats to come up before beginning the attack. In the mean time the officers of both squadrons were scanning each other through their glasses, anxious to discover the strength and dispositions for defense of their opponents. Captain Downie quickly formed his plan of battle, and on the arrival of the tardy gunboats he ordered them to attack the southern end of the American line, while the *Chubb* and the *Linnet* were directed to double the northern end of the line, evidently in the belief that there was sufficient water for that purpose. The *Confiance* and the *Finch* were to attack the *Saratoga* and the *Ticonderoga*.

On the English came, giving repeated cheers, and with their flags defiantly flapping in the fresh northerly breeze. Lieutenant Henley, of the *Eagle*, who had first seen blood in the *Constellation-Vengeance* fight (on which occasion Captain Truxtun remarked, "That stripling is destined to be a brave officer") began a rapid discharge of his long 18-pounders as soon as the enemy entered the bay, but as the shot fell short he desisted. Master-Commandant Macdonough, having carefully made his final preparations, calmly awaited the ordeal. In the lull, ominous of approaching storm, while the Americans stood silently by their guns in momentary expectation of the order to fire, a rooster in the *Eagle*, startled by the cannonading, suddenly flew

upon a gun and gave a prolonged crow. The happy omen drew tremendous cheering from the American squadron, which was echoed and re-echoed by the hills around the bay. Soon afterward the British galleys opened, but Macdonough restrained a general fire until they were in full range. In the mean time he personally trained a long 24-pounder on the advancing *Confiance*, and when she seemed to be within reach he fired. The shot struck her outer hawse hole and passed the length of her deck, killing or wounding several men and carrying away the wheel. This was the signal for all the American long guns to open, and it was followed by a rapid discharge of artillery along the American line. Captain Downie intended to anchor and bring up athwart the *Saratoga's* hawse, and for this purpose he had his two anchors hanging from the port bow ready to drop at the word; but before the *Confiance* came within short range both anchors were shot away. This caused some confusion in Captain Downie's plans, so that, instead of bringing up where he wished, he anchored about three hundred yards off the *Saratoga's* beam.

By this time (9 A. M.) the *Chubb* and the *Linnet* had become hotly engaged with the *Eagle*. The *Chubb* attempted to run across the head of the American line so as to rake, but soon found that it could not be done, on account of the shoals; and Lieutenant Henley, taking advantage of the confusion and the exposed position of the *Chubb*, poured in a full broadside, which carried away her main boom, and killed or wounded nearly half of her people. Thus crippled, the *Chubb* drifted down between the opposing lines of battle toward the *Saratoga*. Observing this, Macdonough trained a bow gun on her, and after one shot the *Chubb* struck and was taken possession of by Midshipman Charles T. Platt, who brought her under the *Saratoga's* stern out to the west of the line of battle. Mr. Platt afterward passed three times though the line of

the enemy's fire in an open boat, carrying orders. The *Linnet* now anchored in a favorable position off the *Eagle's* bow and opened a heavy fire.

The *Finch*, with the twelve gunboats, by this time had engaged the southern end of the line, so that the action had become general. The English flagship, however, reserved her fire until anchored, when she discharged a full, double-shotted broadside into the *Saratoga*. The effect of the sixteen long 24-pounders, deliberately aimed in smooth water, at point-blank range, was terrific. The shock threw many of the *Saratoga's* men prostrate on the deck, and forty were killed or wounded, among the former being First-Lieutenant Peter Gamble, who was killed while on his knees in the act of sighting a gun by a shot that entered the port, splitting the quoin and driving a portion of it against his breast, but without breaking his skin. Recovering from this first blow of the enemy, the men returned to their guns, and from that time the firing was close and rapid. About fifteen minutes later, a shot from the *Saratoga* struck the muzzle of one of the *Confiance's* 24-pounders, hurled the gun out of its carriage, and threw it against Captain Downie, who was standing behind it, hitting him upon the right groin. Although he showed signs of life, he never spoke again. "No part of his skin was broken; a black mark, about the circumference of a small plate, was the only visible injury. His watch was found flattened, with the hands pointing to the hour, minute and second at which the fatal blow was given." The command then devolved upon First-Lieutenant Robertson, who continued the battle with skill and firmness.

Although the Americans had gained some advantage over the smaller vessels, yet all knew that the day would be decided by the flagships, and for an hour the furious cannonading was maintained all along the line, neither side being able to turn the tide of battle. About this time the *Finch*, crippled by the *Ticonderoga*,

drifted over to Crab Island, where, being fired upon by a gun manned by the invalids of the hospital, she surrendered. On the other hand, the British gunboats had compelled the *Preble* to cut her moorings and run inshore, where she anchored and did not again come into action. Encouraged by this success, these gunboats proceeded against the *Ticonderoga* and made several attempts to carry her by boarding. Some of these assaults were so desperate that the galleys got within a boat-hook's length of the schooner, and the men rose from the sweeps in readiness to spring; but Lieutenant Cassin, unmindful of the storm of grape and canister, coolly directed the defense from the taffrail and finally drove the enemy off. In the *Ticonderoga* at this time was Midshipman Hiram Paulding, then only seventeen years old, son of one of the captors of Major André and afterward rear-admiral. In this action he commanded a division of guns, and when the British galleys attacked the *Ticonderoga* it was discovered that the matches for firing the guns were useless. Seeing the urgency of the occasion, young Paulding flashed his pistol at the vent of the cannon and discharged it. While First-Lieutenant John Stansbury, of the *Ticonderoga*, went forward to superintend some work, he was knocked overboard by a cannon ball, which passed through him. Two days later his body rose to the surface near his ship.

All this time the battle at the other end of the line had been raging with unabated fury. The *Linnet* had secured a very advantageous position off the *Eagle's* starboard bow, where the latter could bring but few guns to bear either on the *Linnet* or on the *Confiance*. Finding his springs shot away, Lieutenant Robert Henley sheeted home his topsails, stood about, ran down to the western side of the American line, and anchored between the *Saratoga* and the *Ticonderoga*. This brought the *Eagle's* fresh (port) broadside into full play on the *Confiance*, but it also enabled the *Lin-*

net to turn the American line. Captain Pring promptly availed himself of this opportunity, and soon was off the *Saratoga's* bow, raking her from stem to stern. As gun after gun became disabled, the firing between the flagships gradually diminished, until now only a few cannon were worked. Aboard the *Saratoga* nearly all the carronades had been rendered useless by being overcharged, the men loading with two round shot, besides two stands of grape, the last protruding from the muzzle of the gun. Now that the *Linnet* was raking her with impunity, the situation of the *Saratoga* was critical, and, to add to her accumulating disasters, the navel bolt of the last carronade on the engaged side broke, and the gun flew from its carriage and tumbled down the main hatch. This left her with nearly every gun in her starboard battery dismounted, while the *Confiance* and the *Linnet* were still keeping up an effective fire.

In this desperate extremity, when by all human calculations the day was lost, the shrewd forethought of Thomas Macdonough came to his aid. When arranging his line of battle he had taken the precaution to anchor his vessels far enough apart, so that, should the starboard battery of any ship become disabled, her commander, by tripping his bow anchor and then dropping a stern anchor, could swing his vessel around in the northerly breeze and bring a fresh broadside to bear on the enemy without breaking the line of battle or overlapping the ship astern. The time had now come when the *Saratoga* must either surrender or bring some guns to bear. Accordingly Macdonough, with the aid of Sailing-Master Brum, manned the capstan and tripped the bower anchor, and let go his stream anchor over the stern. But, unfortunately, the wind had gone down, so that the ship remained motionless. The American commander, however, had anticipated this difficulty, and before the action opened had dropped two kedges broad off each side of his bow and brought the lines

attached to them to his quarters. The men now hauled on the kedge line and slowly brought the vessel around, but during all this time the *Linnet* was pouring in broadsides, and now, as the *Saratoga* exposed her stern, the *Confiance* raked. In performing this manœuvre Sailing-Master Brum was knocked senseless by a huge splinter. After several minutes of this exposure Macdonough succeeded in bringing his ship around, and his port battery came into play. The Americans then rushed to their guns and fired with the vigor of long-pent vengeance. The *Confiance* being subjected to the fire of this fresh broadside, the few remaining guns of her port battery were soon disabled. Seeing the success of the *Saratoga's* manœuvre, the British commander attempted to imitate it. He hove in his bow cables until he tripped anchor, but further than this his ship would not move, and Lieutenant Robertson helplessly saw his ship becoming a wreck without being able to strike a blow in return. At 10.30 A. M. he ordered the flag to be hauled down. The *Saratoga* then gave her undivided attention to the *Linnet*, which brig had been maintaining a most exasperating fire on the American flagship, and, after braving the *Saratoga's* broadsides for fifteen minutes, Captain Pring also surrendered. In the latter part of the action the British gunboats had been driven a mile eastward, and when it was seen that the *Confiance* and the *Linnet* had struck, they made all sail, and as not a vessel in

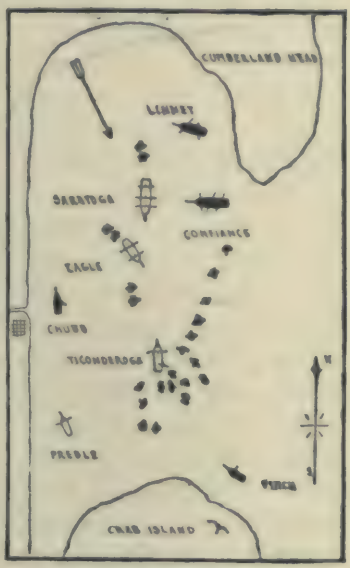


Diagram of the battle, No. 2.

either squadron was in a condition to pursue, they escaped.

Master-Commandant Macdonough, whose conspicuous gallantry throughout this battle had maintained the spirits of his men, and whose sagacity and skill had turned defeat into victory, now penned the following modest dispatch to the Secretary of the Navy: "The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain, in the capture of one frigate, one brig and two sloops of war of the enemy." Macdonough, whom we remember as one of the party that so daringly captured the frigate *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli, had repeatedly assisted in the working of the guns and was twice thrown across the deck by splinters. At one time, while he was bending over his favorite gun in the act of sighting it, a shot cut the spanker boom in two, causing a part of the heavy timber to fall on his back and knocking him senseless to the deck, so that it was some minutes before he recovered consciousness. Soon afterward a shot took off the head of the captain of a gun near by and hurled the ghastly missile against Macdonough, covering him with blood, and knocking him to the other side of the ship, where he fell senseless in the scuppers between two guns. He quickly recovered and again returned to his post. When asked how it was that he escaped without serious injury, while all his officers had been killed or wounded, he replied: "There is a power above which determines the fate of man." Macdonough was promoted to the rank of captain, and the State of New York granted him a thousand acres of land on Cumberland Head, overlooking the scene of his splendid victory. Lieutenant Henley was advanced to the rank of master-commandant, and Congress awarded gold medals to Macdonough, Henley and Cassin, and silver ones to all the commissioned officers and to the nearest male relatives of Lieutenants Gamble and Stansbury, who fell in the battle. Swords also



Battle of Lake Champlain.

Cumberland Head is seen in the extreme upper right-hand corner, and Crabb Island in the lower left-hand corner. The American line of battle extended between these two points.

were given to each of the midshipmen and sailing-masters.

In this sanguinary action of two hours and thirty minutes the *Saratoga* lost twenty-eight men killed and twenty-nine wounded; the *Eagle*, thirteen killed and twenty wounded; the *Ticonderoga*, six killed and six wounded; the *Preble*, two killed; the galleys, three killed and three wounded; making a total American loss of fifty-two killed and fifty-eight wounded. The first lieutenant of the *Eagle*, Joseph Smith, afterward rear-admiral, was severely wounded, but continued at his post. Sailing-Master Rogers Carter and Midshipman James M. Baldwin died from their injuries. Sailing-Master Elie A. F. La Vallette, who commanded the first and second divisions of guns, was knocked senseless. A new glazed hat was presented to one of the American sailors before the battle, and after the action he discovered that a cannon ball had made a semicircular cut in its side and crown. The British loss was: The *Confiance*, forty-one killed and sixty wounded; the *Linnet*, ten killed and fourteen wounded; the *Chubb*, six killed and sixteen wounded; the *Finch*, two wounded; total, fifty-seven killed and ninety-two wounded. It is admitted, however, that Captain Pring's official report was liable to error, as he did not have a favorable opportunity for learning the casualties. The American figures of the enemy's loss, which were collected "from the best information received from British officers, from my own observation, and from various lists found on board the *Confiance*,"[1] are apparently more reliable. They place the British loss at eighty-four killed, one hundred and ten wounded and three hundred and sixty-seven prisoners.[2] Among the killed were Captain Downie, Captain Alexander Anderson, of the marines, Midshipman William Gunn,

[1] Letter from Mr. Beale, the purser, to Macdonough, September 13, 1814.

[2] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 59.

of the *Confiance*, Lieutenant William Paul and Boatswain Charles Jackson, of the *Linnet*. The wife of the steward of the *Confiance* also was killed by a heavy shot, which struck her while she was attending to the wounded in the cockpit. Midshipman William Lee, of the *Confiance*, wrote: "The havoc on both sides was dreadful. I don't think there are more than five of our men, out of three hundred, but what are killed or wounded. Never was a shower of hail so thick as the shot whistling about our ears. Were you to see my jacket, waistcoat and trousers, you would be astonished how I escaped as I did, for they are literally torn all to rags with shot and splinters. The upper part of my hat was also shot away. There is one of our marines who was in the Trafalgar action with Lord Nelson, who says it was a mere flea bite in comparison with this."

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
American:	86	1,904	850	52	58	110	Time
British:	92	1,900	1,000	84	110	194	2h. 20m.

By the second broadside nearly all the hammocks and rigging of the *Saratoga* were cut away, and during the action she received fifty-five round shot in her hull, and was twice set on fire by hot shot from the *Confiance*. Midshipman Lee, of the *Confiance*, in a letter to his brother, wrote: "Our masts, yards and sails were so shattered that one looked like so many bunches of matches and the other like a bundle of rags." The *Eagle* received thirty-nine round shot—mostly 24-pounders—in the hull, and four heavy shot in her lower masts, while her sides were peppered with grape. The *Confiance* was demolished; one hundred and five round shot were counted in her side. In his official report Macdonough spoke in the highest terms of Lieutenant Peter Gamble, Sailing-Masters La Vallette and Brum, Captain Young, of the marines, George Beale, the purser, who assisted at the great guns,

Midshipmen John B. Montgomery, W. L. Monteith, John H. Graham, Williamson, Charles T. Platt and Samuel Thwing, Acting-Midshipman Baldwin and Master's-Mate Joshua Justin. Master-Commandant Henley, of the *Eagle*, especially commended Lieutenant Joseph Smith, Acting-Lieutenants William Ambrose Spencer and Loomis, and Midshipmen Chamberlain, William McChesney and Henry Tardy. The galleys were admirably handled, especially those under the command of Sailing-Masters Conover, H. M. Breese and Robins. "The absence and sickness of Lieutenant Raymond Perry left me without the services of that excellent officer. Much ought fairly to be attributed to him for his great care and attention in disciplining the ship's crew as her first lieutenant."[1]

While the naval battle was in progress the British army made an assault on the American lines, but was repelled with loss, and, on learning of Downie's defeat, Sir George Prevost abandoned the invasion and retreated to Canada, leaving most of his artillery, stores and provisions in the hands of the Americans. The colors of the *Confiance*, the *Linnet* and the *Chubb* are preserved in the Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

The enemy, baffled at Lake Ontario, Lake Erie and Lake Champlain, now determined to strike an unexpected blow at some southern section of the country. New Orleans was decided upon, and a formidable fleet and army were collected for the expedition. It might be difficult at first to understand why such a distant and apparently unimportant point as New Orleans should be attacked, but the British minister undoubtedly had in view the original plan of the French, viz.: the consolidation of the Canadas, the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi and the province of Louisiana in one vast domain, thereby cutting off the seaboard States

[1] Official report of Master-Commandant Macdonough.

from the West. Negotiations for peace had been in progress for some time, and a treaty was actually signed by the commissioners at Ghent on the 14th of December. Yet, when the announcement of peace between the United States and England was momentarily expected, the British ministry launched this most formidable army of the war against the isolated port of New Orleans.

The object of this *coup de main* was to secure in the pending negotiations a British holding at the mouth of the Mississippi, which, once firmly established, would enable Great Britain to control the navigation of that mighty river and the enormous tract of country drained by its confluents. This was not an idle fancy on the part of the British ministers, for they well knew that, could they but once get a firm grip on the throat of this vast river system, the entire territory drained by it was under their control. How great was the danger at this point, and how feeble the force to protect, will be seen in the remainder of this chapter.

On the 12th of December, when the enemy's fleet, under Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane, appeared off Lake Borgne, the American naval force on this lake, commanded by Lieutenant Thomas ap Catesby Jones, consisted of gunboat No. 156, five guns, forty-one men, Lieutenant Jones; gunboat No. 23, five guns, thirty-nine men, Lieutenant Isaac McKeever; gunboat No. 162, five guns, thirty-five men, Lieutenant Robert Spedden; gunboat No. 5, five guns, thirty-six men, Sailing-Master Jonathan D. Ferriss; gunboat No. 163, three guns, twenty-one men, Sailing-Master George Uhlrich; sloop *Seahorse*, one gun, fourteen men, Sailing-Master Robert Johnson; sloop *Alligator*, one gun, eight men, Sailing-Master Sheppard; total, twenty-five guns, one hundred and ninety-four men. On the night of the 12th of December, forty-two launches, armed with 24-, 18- and 12-pound carronades, and three unarmed gigs, conveying altogether about nine hundred and

eighty seamen and marines, entered the lake for the purpose of attacking the American flotilla. Observing their approach, Lieutenant Jones dispatched the *Seahorse*, Sailing-Master Johnson, to destroy some stores that were collected at St. Louis Bay, while he, with the gunboats, retired to Les Petites Coquilles. At 4 P. M. the enemy sent three barges after the *Seahorse*, but Mr. Johnson made such excellent use of his single 6-pounder that the enemy put back for re-enforcements, and in the mean time the *Seahorse* was anchored to secure the support of a 6-pounder on shore. The enemy soon returned to the attack with a much larger force, and, as James says, "it appears that, after sustaining a very destructive fire for nearly half an hour, the boats were repulsed" the second time. Seeing that the sloop and stores must eventually fall a prey to the overwhelming force that was advancing to the third attack, Mr. Johnson burned them with his sloop and retreated by land. The *Alligator*, on the same day, was captured while endeavoring to follow the gunboats.

Lieutenant Jones now made every preparation to receive the attack on his flotilla. His gunboats were judiciously anchored in a line across the narrow passage of Malheureux; but about three o'clock in the morning of the 14th, gunboats Nos. 156 and 163 were forced out of line by the swift current and carried a hundred yards down the pass, where they were beyond the support of those above them. Before they could be returned to their positions the British barges, carrying forty-two guns and about a thousand men, according to the official report of the British commander, Captain Lockyer, were discovered advancing to the attack. Arriving within gunshot of the stray gunboats, three barges made a dash at No. 156, but her crew fired with such deliberation that two of the barges were sunk and the third retreated. About noon the enemy sent an overwhelming force against this gun-

boat, and, after a desperate resistance, captured her. In these attacks Lieutenant Jones was dangerously wounded, so that the command fell to Midshipman Parker, who continued the action with spirit. The English then turned the guns of gunboat No. 156 on gunboat No. 163, which was soon captured by their barges. Shortly afterward gunboat No. 162 met a similar fate, but not without a gallant fight, in which her commander, Mr. Spedden, was seriously wounded. By 12.30 P. M. Nos. 5 and 23 were also taken.

This little affair was most creditable to Lieutenant Jones and his men. Had not his gunboats been separated just before the engagement, thus enabling the enemy to attack them separately, the result might have been far more serious to the English. As it was, Captain Lockyer reported his losses as being "extremely severe"—three midshipmen and fourteen seamen killed, and one captain, five lieutenants, three master's mates, seven midshipmen and sixty-one seamen (in all, seventy-seven) wounded. The American loss was six killed and Lieutenant Jones and thirty-four men wounded.[1]

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Men.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.
American :	23	172	6	35	41
British :	42	980	17	77	94

The only vessels in this region now remaining to the Americans were the *Louisiana*, Lieutenant C. B. Thompson, purchased for the emergency and armed with sixteen long 24-pounders, and the 14-gun schooner *Carolina*. On the night of December 23d, when the British army was encamped near the river, the *Carolina*, Master-Commandant Daniel T. Patterson, quietly worked up the Mississippi and took a position on the left flank of the British army. "A little before eight

[1] Official report of Surgeon Marshall.

o'clock," says an Englishman who was in the expedition, "the attention of some was drawn to a large vessel which seemed to be stealing up the river until she came opposite to the British stations, when her anchor was dropped and her sails were leisurely furled. Various were the opinions entertained of this stranger. She was hailed, but no answer was returned; all idea of sleep, however, was now laid aside, and several musket shots were fired, of which not the slightest notice was taken, until at length, all her sails being fastened and her broadsides swung toward our camp, a voice was distinctly heard exclaiming, 'Give them this in honor of America!' The flashes of her guns instantly followed, and a shower of grapeshot swept down numbers among the British troops. An incessant cannonade was then kept up, which could not be silenced, for our people had no artillery, and a few rockets that were discharged deviated so much from their object as to afford only amusement for the enemy. Under such circumstances, therefore, all were ordered to leave their fires and shelter themselves under the dikes, where they lay each as he could find room, listening in painful silence to the iron hail among the boats and to the shrieks and groans of those that were wounded. The night was dark as pitch, the fires were all extinguished, and not an object was visible, except during momentary flashes of the guns, when a straggling fire called attention toward our piquets, as if some still more dreadful scene was about to open; nor was it long before suspense was cut short by a tremendous yell and a semicircular blaze of musketry, which showed that our position was surrounded by a superior force, and that no alternative remained but to surrender or drive back the assailants. The first of these plans was instantly rejected, for our troops, rushing from their lurking places and dashing through their bivouac, under heavy discharges from the vessel, lost not a moment in attacking the foe without the

slightest attention to order or the rules of disciplined warfare. The combat, which was left to individual valor and skill, lasted till three in the morning, and though the enemy was finally repulsed, no less than five hundred of our finest troops and best officers were left on the field. The rest then retired to their former hiding-places, to be out of reach of their enemy on the river, which, when daylight appeared, was discovered to be a fine schooner of eighteen guns, crowded with troops. In the cold dikes, however, our men were compelled to remain the whole ensuing day, without fire and without food, for whenever the smallest number began to steal away from shelter the vessel opened her fire."

On the morning of the 27th the enemy opened on the *Carolina* with hot shot and shell, and the current was so strong that the schooner could not be brought out of range, not even by warping. After returning the cannonade with the only gun that could be brought to bear, she was abandoned and fired. The gallantry of Lieutenants Otho Norris and Charles E. Crowley and Sailing-Master Halter was highly spoken of by Master-Commandant John D. Henley. The loss in the *Carolina* was seven killed or wounded. On the 28th of December the *Louisiana*, Master-Commandant John Dandridge Henley, greatly harassed the advance of the British army, throwing about eight hundred shot; and during the great battle of New Orleans (January 8, 1815) this vessel rendered valuable service by covering the flank of the American army. While thus engaged Henley was wounded. Midshipman Philibert handled one gun in particular so as to attract attention. When the English retreated, Master-Commandant Patterson sent several boat parties to annoy them. Thomas Shields, a purser, in command of six boats and fifty men, captured one of the enemy's barges with forty officers and men of the Fourteenth Light Dragoons and fourteen seamen, and soon afterward Mr. Shields cap-

tured another barge, a transport schooner and five boats, which gave him eighty-three additional prisoners. A few of them were retaken, but seventy-three prisoners were secured. Sailing-Master Johnson also destroyed a transport and captured some of the fugitives. Among the officers that especially distinguished themselves in this campaign were Master Commandant Patterson, Master-Commandant Henley, Lieutenants Jones, Charles C. B. Thompson, Isaac McKeever, Robert Spedden, Thomas Cunningham, Otho Norris, Charles E. Crowley, and Major Daniel Carmick of the marine corps. Major Carmick was wounded in the fight of the 28th of December.

In this expedition of overwhelming disasters the British were routed and driven back to their ships with the loss of two thousand to three thousand men, while the American loss during the entire expedition did not exceed two hundred. "There never was a more complete failure," wrote Admiral Sir Edward Codrington to his wife.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONSTITUTION ON THE AFRICAN COAST.

THE career of the 44-gun frigate *Constitution*, so far as has been narrated in these pages, is sufficiently remarkable to stamp her as an extraordinary ship. Her last cruise in the War of 1812, however, although probably not as well known, was the one in which she achieved her greatest triumph and performed her most brilliant service. On the return of Captain Charles Stewart from his cruise in the West Indies, April 23, 1814, *Old Ironsides* was blockaded in Boston by a powerful British squadron, and did not get to sea again until the 17th of the following December, when she skillfully gave the enemy the slip and was once again cruising in blue water. It was not long before the officers of the blockading squadron—at that time consisting of the 50-gun ship *Newcastle*, Captain Lord George Stuart, the 40-gun frigate *Acasta*, Captain Kerr, and the 18-gun brig *Arab*, Captain Henry Jane—learned that the dreaded *Constitution* had escaped their vigilance. All English ships, whether cruisers or merchantmen, were now instructed to speak to every craft they met and spread the news that "the *Constitution* is again cruising," and in a wonderfully short time, by means of this marine telegraph, the news was wafted to every corner of the Atlantic, and thereafter British ships of the line maintained a double look-out, and their smaller frigates sailed in couples, while their sloops of war stood away from every sail that bore the least resemblance to the *Constitution*.

After running down to Bermuda, where, on the 24th of December, the *Constitution* captured the merchant ship *Lord Nelson*, Captain Stewart stood across to the Madeiras, and then for several days cruised within sight of the Rock of Lisbon. On the 18th of February chase was given to a large sail, but scarcely had the *Constitution* got well under way when another stranger was descried to leeward, and, changing his course for the latter, Captain Stewart soon overhauled the British merchant ship *Susan*. By that time the first sail, which proved to be the British 74-gun ship of the line *Elizabeth*, had disappeared, but arriving at Lisbon a few hours afterward she learned that the *Constitution* was off the coast, and immediately put to sea in search of her. By one of the strange coincidences of sea life, Captain Dacres, who commanded the *Guerrière* when she was captured by the *Constitution* in 1812, also happened to be in the vicinity of Lisbon at this time in command of the 38-gun frigate *Tiber*, of the same force as the *Guerrière*. At the court-martial convened to try him for the loss of the *Guerrière* Captain Dacres said: "It is my earnest wish, and would be the happiest moment of my life, to be once more opposed to the *Constitution* with them [the *Guerrière's* crew] under my command, in a frigate of similar force to the *Guerrière*." Profiting by his experience with American 44-gun frigates, Captain Dacres had brought the crew of the *Tiber* to a high degree of efficiency, and had prepared his frigate especially with the view of meeting a ship of the *Constitution's* rate, and it seemed as if his desire to meet *Old Ironsides* were about to be gratified. Boarding a merchantman, he learned that the *Constitution* was in the vicinity, and speaking to several merchant ships "who had seen the American frigate only a few hours before," he kept in the *Constitution's* track and gradually drew up with her.

On the 19th of February Captain Stewart was holding a course from the coast of Spain southward toward

Madeira, with the *Elizabeth* and the *Tiber* only a few hours behind him. About noon of this day a group of officers gathered at the starboard gangway of the American frigate, and were commenting on their ill luck in failing to meet an enemy of equal force in their cruise of several weeks in European waters. Overhearing them, Captain Stewart, who was a believer in presentiments, bade the officers to be of good cheer, and said: "I assure you, gentlemen, that before the sun again rises and sets you will be engaged in battle with the enemy, and it will not be with a single ship."[1]

The 20th of February dawned cloudy and thick, with a choppy sea and a moisture-laden breeze from the northeast. The *Constitution* at this time was bowling along under short canvas and keeping a sharp lookout for the enemy, the island of Madeira bearing about one hundred and eighty miles to the southwest by west. The day wore on with little or no change in the weather and with nothing to arouse interest or suspicion, and the men off duty, glad to escape the disagreeable moisture of the atmosphere, were cosily stowed away in their quarters below. The usual routine of the ship went on; the cooks, stewards and cabin boys were busy with the midday mess, while several of the officers, in spite of their affected contempt for superstition, were discussing their chances of meeting an enemy. About one o'clock in the afternoon the lookout on the fore-topsail yard hailed the deck, saying that he had just caught a glimpse of a large sail through a break in the fog, about two points off the port bow. In a moment the welcome tidings spread through the ship, and the watch below came tumbling up on deck into the chilly air to get a look at the object of general interest, while an officer with a spyglass climbed the dripping rigging to get a

[1] Richard Watson Gilder, Hours at Home, vol. x, p. 275.

better view of the stranger. Captain Stewart was fully aware that the enemy had been advised of his escape, and that an unusually strong force had been dispatched against him, but that intrepid officer determined to run down to the stranger and see what she was. The sharp orders to make all sail were given and carried out with rapidity, and soon the frigate was bearing down under a cloud of canvas and dashing through the water at eight knots. In three quarters of an hour the lookout reported another sail, ahead of the first, apparently cruising in her company. By this time the stranger first discovered was quite near, but being painted with double yellow sides and false ports in the waist, she had the appearance of a double-decked ship, and Lieutenant Ballard told Captain Stewart that she must be at least a 50-gun ship. The latter replied that she looked too small to be a ship of that class, but might be an old 44 on two decks. "However," he added, "be this as it may, you know I promised you a fight before the setting of to-morrow's sun, and if we do not take it now that it is offered, we can scarcely have another chance. We must flog them when we catch them, whether she has one gun-deck or two!"

The *Constitution* now exercised greater deliberation in her movements, as on account of the hazy weather the strangers were not far off when first discovered. By 2 P. M. the sails were made out to be full-rigged ships, standing close hauled on the starboard tack. The three ships continued on this course until 4 P. M., when the *Constitution* had gained so much as to be nearly within range of the sternmost vessel, and it was now seen that the strangers were ships of war, one a frigate and the other a large sloop of war, but as both of them were ship rigged it was difficult to determine their exact force. About this time the weathermost ship signaled her consort and then stood away to leeward, so as to bring up with her, while the *Constitu-*

tion, with her studding sails bent, rapidly came up with them. But at 4.30 P. M., just as the frigate was about to open fire, her main royal mast gave way, and this mishap compelled Captain Stewart to abandon the chase. The magnificent discipline maintained in the *Constitution* was never shown to better advantage than in the way this damage was repaired. Men were quickly sent up the rigging, the wreck was cleared away, and in an incredibly short time another spar had been sent up and rigged, and a little after 5 P. M. the fretful frigate was again bounding after the chase. But the delay caused by this accident had enabled the strangers to come together, so that Captain Stewart lost the opportunity of attacking them separately; and seeing the two ships four miles ahead, close hauled on the starboard tack, waiting for the American to approach, Captain Stewart cleared for action and beat to quarters. At 5.45 P. M. the enemy endeavored to secure the weather gage, but after ten minutes' trial of speed they gave over the attempt and formed their two ships in a line of battle, east and west, about half a cable's length apart, while the *Constitution* bore down from the north to engage. At 6 P. M. she hauled up her courses and showed her colors, upon which the enemy shook out their flags. By this time the fog had rolled aside so that the moonlight enabled the combatants to make each other out distinctly.

At five minutes past six the *Constitution*, being about three hundred yards abeam of the sternmost ship, opened fire from the long guns of her port battery. Both British ships promptly responded with their starboard guns, and for fifteen minutes there was a deafening roar of artillery, the *Constitution* concentrating her fire on the sternmost vessel. By 6.20 P. M. such dense volumes of smoke had collected around the ships that it was impossible to aim accurately, so that the *Constitution* ceased firing, and, rapidly drawing

ahead, ranged abeam of the foremost ship, and having reloaded with a double-shotted broadside, she belched forth a torrent of round, grape and canister with great effect. This was a staggering blow, and the enemy's ship quivered as if she had struck a rock, but before this broadside could be repeated the sternmost ship was observed luffing up so as to take a raking position across the *Constitution's* stern. Mindful of his danger, Captain Stewart suddenly braced his main and mizzen topsails flat to the mast, shook all forward, let go his jib sheet, and quietly but swiftly backed, under cover of the smoke, abreast the rear ship. This manœuvre was executed in beautiful style. The yards swung around almost as soon as the order was issued, the ship checked her course, trembled for a moment, and then began backing. As if by magic the *Constitution* had dropped astern, and almost before the enemy was aware of it was alongside of the sternmost ship, with every gun of her formidable battery reloaded and double-shotted. Again the quiet order was passed along the divisions, and the next instant a murderous discharge of iron tore its way into the British frigate. Captain Stewart now maintained a heavy and rapid fire on this vessel until 6.35 P. M., when, observing the headmost ship luffing athwart his course to rake, he filled away under topsails, and, shooting ahead, crossed the wake of the foremost ship and secured a raking position before the smoke from the last cannonading had sufficiently cleared away to enable the English to discover



Diagram of the battle.

C, the *Constitution*; the black ship is the *Cyane*, and the shaded ship is the *Levant*.

the whereabouts of their nimble foe. The Americans now fired their starboard broadside, raking the Englishman fore and aft, and before he could recover from the dreadful effects of this blow the Americans had again loaded and poured in a second raking broadside. About this time a heavy shot from the enemy killed two men in the *Constitution's* waist, crashed through a boat in which two tigers were chained and lodged in the head of a spar in the chains.

At 6.38 P. M. the sternmost Englishman was seen to be wearing with a view of raking the *Constitution*, but she wore after him so quickly that before the Englishman could follow the manœuvre the *Constitution* had crossed his wake and poured in a raking broadside. Before this fire could be repeated the sternmost ship had so far followed the movement as to bring the two ships side by side. She then opened with her port battery, while Captain Stewart used his starboard guns, and in this position the two ships maintained a running fire until 6.50 P. M., when the Englishman hoisted a light and fired a gun as a signal of surrender. Lieutenant Beekman Verplank Hoffman, of the *Constitution*, was immediately sent aboard to take possession, and he found the prize was the British 32-gun frigate *Cyane*, Captain Gordon Falcon. After an hour spent in removing and securing prisoners, the *Constitution* at 8 P. M. filled away in chase of the second ship, which during this time had made off to leeward, improving the opportunity to repair damages and splice rigging; but at 8.15 P. M., observing the American frigate again bearing down on her, and still being ignorant of the fate of her consort, she close hauled her starboard tacks, and with topgallant sails and colors set stood for her powerful antagonist. At 9.05 P. M. the ships passed each other and exchanged broadsides, but before the smoke had cleared away Captain Stewart wore short around, crossed the enemy's wake and raked, upon which the Englishman crowded all sail to escape. The Ameri-



The Constitution backing between the two English ships.

cans promptly luffed up, hauled aboard their tacks, set the spanker and flying jib, and were after him in close pursuit. At 9.30 P. M. the *Constitution* opened with her starboard chase gun with a view of crippling the enemy in his rigging, and by 10 P. M. she had gained position close on to the Englishman's port quarter, and seeing that the American was about to reopen his dreaded broadside, the enemy surrendered. Lieutenant William Brandford Shubrick was ordered to take possession, and soon sent back word that this ship was the British sloop of war *Levant*, Captain George Douglas.

The *Constitution* on this cruise carried thirty-one long 24-pounders and twenty short 32-pounders; in all, fifty-one guns and six hundred and forty-four pounds actual weight of metal to the broadside, allowing for deficiency in the weight of American shot; her crew numbered four hundred and fifty-six.[1] "The *Cyane* is a frigate-built ship, mounting thirty-four carriage guns, viz., twenty-two 32-pound carronades on the main deck, eight 18-pound carronades on the quarter-deck, two 18-pound carronades and two long 9-pounders on the forecastle, and, from the best information I could obtain, carrying a complement of one hundred and seventy-five men."[2] James does not give the armament carried by the *Cyane* on this occasion, merely referring to her force in 1809, nearly six years before. Moreover, the British official reports of this action have not been published. Lieutenant Hoffman, who took charge of the *Cyane* immediately upon her surrender and for sixty days afterward was in her, describes her force as above. This gives the *Cyane* thirty-four guns, with four hundred and fifty-one pounds of metal to the broadside. "The *Levant* mounted eighteen 32-pound carronades, two long 9-pounders and one 12-pound

[1] Emmons' Statistical History of the United States Navy, p. 58.

[2] Official report of Lieutenant Hoffman.

carronade, with one hundred and thirty-eight men on board,"[1] giving her twenty-one guns, aggregating three hundred and three pounds of metal to the broadside. The *Constitution's* loss was four killed and ten wounded.[2] She sustained but little damage in her rigging, her principal injuries being in the hull. In her action with the *Guerrière* she was hulled three times, in that with the *Java* four times and in this engagement thirteen times. The *Cyane* lost twelve killed and twenty-six wounded,[3] besides which every brace and bowline was cut away, her main and mizzen masts were left in a tottering state, other principal spars were wounded, there were several shot in the hull, nine or ten between wind and water, five carronades were disabled and most of her standing and running rigging was carried away. The *Levant* lost twenty-three killed and sixteen wounded.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.
Constitution:	51	644	456	4	10	14
Cyane and *Levant:*	55	754	313	35	42	77

The boldness of the *Constitution's* attack on what in the hazy weather appeared to be "two frigates" (when Sir George Collier's squadron sighted the *Constitution*, the *Cyane* and the *Levant*, shortly afterward, the last two were recorded in the *Leander's* log as "apparently frigates"), the marvelous celerity of her manœuvres, the precision of her fire and the perfect order and coolness pervading her entire company, from the time the enemy was sighted to the close of the battle, reflects the highest honor on Captain Stewart. The patriotism of the American crew is shown

[1] Official report of Lieutenant Henry E. Ballard, who was put in command of the *Levant* after her surrender and continued there for twenty days.

[2] Official report of Captain Stewart.

[3] Official report of Lieutenant Hoffman.

in the case of a sailor named John Lancey, of Cape Ann, who was carried below horribly mutilated and writhing in his death agonies. When the surgeon informed him that his end was near, the poor fellow gasped, "Yes, sir, I know it, but I only want to hear that the other ship has struck." Soon afterward he heard the cheers for the surrender of the *Levant*, when, unmindful of his injuries, he raised his head, and, waving the stump of his arm, expended his last vitality in three feeble cheers.

It is related that after the battle, when Captain Stewart was sitting in his cabin conversing with one of the British commanders, a midshipman came in to say that the officer of the deck wished to know if the men could have their grog. As the usual time for grog had passed before the action took place, Captain Stewart replied, "The men have had their grog already, haven't they?" "No, sir," replied the midshipman; "it was mixed ready for serving just before the battle began, but the forecastle men and other older sailors of the crew said they didn't want any Dutch courage on board and capsized the grog-tub in the lee scuppers." The English officer asked, with astonishment, if it were possible that there were men in the American navy who would "spill their grog like that." About the same time the two British captains got into a dispute about the result of the fight, each imputing the defeat to the other, and contending that if such and such an evolution had been practiced by one or the other the *Constitution* would have had to surrender. "Gentlemen," said Stewart, "there is no use in getting warm about it; it would have been all the same whatever you might have done. If you doubt that, I will put you all on board again and you can try it over."[1]

The Americans made all haste to repair damages

[1] Richard Watson Gilder in Hours at Home.

and secure prisoners, for they well knew that the seas were swarming with British cruisers sent out expressly to intercept them, and by 1 A. M. on the 21st, or three hours after the *Levant* surrendered, the *Constitution* was ready for another action. On the following day the vessels made sail for the nearest neutral port, and on the 10th of March anchored in Port Praya, where they found the *Susan*.

Captain Stewart now decided to employ the *Susan* as a cartel in which he could send his prisoners to England. About noon on the day after his arrival in Port Praya, while the men were busy transferring the prisoners, the officer of the deck, Lieutenant Shubrick, was attracted by an exclamation from one of the British midshipmen, and noticing that he was reprimanded in an undertone by an English lieutenant, Lieutenant Shubrick became suspicious of foul play or some conspiracy. But at this moment a quartermaster directed his attention to the entrance of the harbor, where a heavy fog had settled over the sea, but in the lighter haze above the sails of a large ship were visible. This apparition evidently was the cause of the midshipman's exclamation, and Captain Stewart was immediately notified of the approach of a stranger. As the mists shifted a little the sails of two more vessels, apparently heavy men-of-war, were discovered standing into the roads. After the experience of the *Essex* at Valparaiso, Captain Stewart well knew that English commanders could not be trusted to respect the rights of neutral ports that were not sufficiently fortified to enforce them. The defenses of Port Praya were impotent against a first-rate frigate, and should the sails descried in the offing prove to be those of English men-of-war, the position of the *Constitution* was critical in the extreme. The capture of no American frigate would have caused so much rejoicing in England as that of the *Constitution*, for *Old Ironsides* had done more to level British pride than any other ship.



The Constitution at close quarters.

The American 44-gun frigates had the gangway leading from the quarter-deck to the forecastle made extra wide and heavy, so that carronades could be mounted on them. These additional guns were not mounted in any of the frigate actions of the War of 1812. The quarter-deck extended to the main-mast. It was purposely omitted in this picture so as to give a better view of the gun deck.

If Stewart did not get out of the harbor before the approaching strangers closed the entrance, the favorite ship of the United States navy was lost. Realizing the danger, the American commander sent his crew to quarters, hurried the prisoners below, cut his cables, and set the topsails, and in seven minutes from the time of the first alarm he had the frigate under way. Signals were made to the *Cyane* and the *Levant* to follow, which orders Lieutenants Hoffman and Ballard precipitately obeyed, and they also were soon standing down the harbor after the *Constitution*. So great was the haste, that some prisoners who had been landed to facilitate the transfer were left behind. Discovering the strange sails in the offing, and surmising them to be English, these prisoners rushed to a battery and began firing guns to give warning.

At this time the wind was fresh from the northeast, while the strangers were approaching the harbor from the south. Captain Stewart therefore hugged the north shore, hoping to get to sea to the windward of them; and just as the American vessels were clearing East Point the strangers came within long range. At this moment they discovered the Americans, and crowded on all sail to intercept them, so that it now became a question of sailing. The *Constitution* crossed her topgallant yards, and set her foresail, mainsail, spanker, flying jib and topgallant sails, while the first cutter and gig towing astern were cut adrift. The *Cyane* and *Levant* followed in quick succession, while the English luffed up, close hauled their tacks, and settled down to a long and determined pursuit.

In order that we may more intelligently follow this remarkable chase, we must understand that the hostile squadron consisted of the British 50-gun frigate *Leander*, Captain Sir George Collier; the 50-gun frigate *Newcastle*, Captain Lord George Stuart; and the 40-gun frigate *Acasta*, Captain Kerr. These vessels, especially the *Newcastle* and the *Acasta*, had been block-

ading the *Constitution* in Boston at the time of her escape, December 17, 1814, and how they came to be in this out-of-the-way part of the globe instead of on the New England coast is best told in the words of James: "On the 19th of December, two days after the escape of the *Constitution*, the *Leander* sailed from Halifax, bound off Boston, and on the 24th fell in with the *Newcastle* and *Acasta*. By their captains, it appears, Sir George was informed that the *Constitution* had sailed from Boston and the *Congress* from Portsmouth, N. H., and that the *President* was to join those ships from the Delaware. Unfortunately, although it had been published over and over again in the Halifax papers, neither of these captains appears to have been aware that the *Congress* had some months before been dismantled and laid up at Portsmouth, and that the *President* was not lying in the Delaware but in New York. On turning to the *Newcastle's* log, to see who it was that had been playing off such a hoax upon Lord George, we find that on the 22d, while the *Newcastle* and the *Acasta* were lying at anchor in Cape Cod Bay, the 18-gun brig sloop *Arab*, Captain Henry Jane, joined company, with intelligence that the *Constitution* had sailed from Boston on the 17th instant. Not another word is there. This, however, was quite enough to hasten the two ships in getting under way, and to make their captains wish, no doubt, that they had kept under way in front of the port which they had been ordered to watch. This story about the sailing of the American squadron, whether derived in the first instance from fishermen, cattle-dealers or any other of the cunning New England folk, was credited by Sir George Collier, and away went the *Leander*, the *Newcastle* and the *Acasta*, in search of the *Constitution* and the 'two other heavy frigates' that sailed 'in her company.' On the 4th of January, when off the Western Isles, the three ships fell in with a brig prize belong-

ing to the American privateer *Perry*, and, having chased under American colors, were taken for an American squadron. The consequence was, that the prize master of the brig voluntarily came on board the *Leander* and pretended to take that ship for the *President*, the *Newcastle* for the *Constitution* and the *Acasta* not for the *Congress* but for the *Macedonian*. In short, the fellow would have said or sworn to anything that he thought would ingratiate himself with his hearers. Marshall says: 'Nothing could have happened better' than this farcical interview with the American privateersman. On the contrary, looking to the serious impression it appears to have made on board the *Leander*, we should rather say nothing could have happened worse." Thus, by a strange series of blunders these heavy British frigates had blindly followed the *Constitution* across the Atlantic into this distant quarter of the globe and now had her under their guns.

At the time the American vessels gained an offing it was still so foggy that it was impossible to see the hulls of the strangers or to make out their force or nationality. All the ships, however, had every stitch of canvas set, to royal studding sails, and were rushing through the water at ten knots. The *Acasta*, by laying her head close to the wind, succeeded in weathering the *Cyane* and the *Levant*, but the splendid sailing qualities of the *Constitution* enabled Captain Stewart to hold his own. Observing that he was drawing away from his prizes, and that the enemy must soon close on them, he at 1.10 P. M. signaled the *Cyane*, the sternmost vessel, to tack to the northwest, hoping to divide the enemy's force. Lieutenant Hoffman tacked as desired; but, to the surprise of all, none of the pursuing ships were detailed after her. Taking advantage of their neglect, the *Cyane* continued on this course until she had run the enemy out of sight, when she made for the United States, arriving in New

York April 10th. At 2.30 P. M. the *Newcastle* had gained a position off the *Constitution's* lee quarter and began firing by division. Her shot splashed the water within a hundred yards of the American frigate, but did not reach her. By 3 P. M. the *Levant* had fallen behind the *Constitution*, and was in the same danger from which the *Cyane* had so strangely been allowed to escape. Captain Stewart now signaled the *Levant* to head northwest also, hoping that this might draw off at least one of his pursuers. But, to the astonishment of every man in the *Constitution*, all the pursuing ships followed her about! Availing himself of this unexpected opportunity, Captain Stewart soon ran the enemy out of sight, and early in May he returned to Boston. Finding that the entire squadron had concentrated its attentions on his ship, Lieutenant Ballard changed his course to due west so as to regain port. In this he was successful, and he anchored under the guns of the fort before the enemy could get within gunshot. The *Cyane* had now escaped, the *Constitution* was out of sight, and the *Levant* had gained a neutral port, where, according to the laws of nations, she was protected from further attack. But Sir George Collier ordered the *Newcastle* and the *Acasta* to run in and fire on the *Levant*, and, after a few minutes' doubt as to the real intentions of the English commander, Lieutenant Ballard was compelled to surrender, and the *Acasta* took possession. "The next morning," says James, "Sir George Collier went ashore to communicate with the governor in consequence of the damage done to the houses of the town by the shot from the *Acasta* and *Newcastle*."

The escape of the *Constitution* and *Cyane* from this powerful squadron and the extraordinary manœuvres of the British ships have given rise to many conflicting explanations among English writers. One account says that "no British ship tacked after the *Cyane*, Sir George rightly judging that she would reach the neu-

tral port before either of the British ships could get within gunshot of her." But this "neutral port" explanation does not hold good, for a few hours afterward Sir George ordered the *Newcastle* and the *Acasta* to run in and fire on the *Levant* when her jib boom extended over a land battery in this same "neutral port," showing that the English commander had no scruples whatever about the neutrality of the place. According to a published letter of Thomas Collier, "the midshipman, Mr. Morrison, whose duty it was to make the signal, did, by mistake, hoist the general signal." In another statement, which bears the signature of the *Leander's* first lieutenant, it is said "that in making the signal the *Acasta's* distinguishing pennants got foul, and before they could be cleared the *Newcastle* mistook it for a general signal."[1] Marshall further says: "Sir George Collier, confiding in the zeal and judgment of the captains under his orders, had previously informed them that, whenever a certain flag was hoisted with any signal to either of them, they were at liberty to disregard the signal, if they considered that by following the order conveyed thereby the object in view was not so likely to be attained as by acting in contrariety thereto. The flag alluded to was entered *pro tempore* in the signal books under the designation of the optional flag. But upon its being hoisted with the *Newcastle's* pennants, as above stated, that ship made answer by signal 'the flags are not distinguishable.'" Other British writers declare that Sir George did not give the order for all the ships to tack after the *Levant*.

Such diversity of opinion, especially when there are, as James frankly admits, "three distinct and positive explanations made on the highest English authorities, of Sir George Collier's blunders, yet each of the three flatly contradicts the others," naturally leads to

[1] Marshall's History of the British Navy, vol. ii, p. 527.

deeper investigation on our part. In an extract from James' History of the British Navy already given, we have seen that Sir George Collier was under the impression that he was following the *Constitution*, the *President* and the *Macedonian* or *Guerrière*, three 44-gun frigates, across the Atlantic. That he was still acting under this impression on the day of the chase in question is shown by the *Leander's* (Sir George Collier's flagship) log, which describes all three ships as "apparently frigates," and this is further emphasized by the *Leander's* first lieutenant, John McDougall, who recorded the following note: "Weather very thick and hazy; took the two sternmost ships for frigates, the headmost, from appearance, a much larger ship, for the *Guerrière*, who, we understood, had long 32-pounders on her main deck." After the disastrous experience of the *Macedonian*, the *Java* and the first *Guerrière* with American 24-pounder 44-gun frigates, British commanders had been cautious in seeking engagements. But the *Newcastle* and the *Leander*, especially the latter, had been fitted out with the express purpose of coping with the American 44-gun frigate, for the London Times of March 17, 1814, said the *Leander* "has been built and fitted out exactly upon the plan of the large American frigates." This fact, together with the general order of the Admiralty restraining British 18-pounder frigates from engaging American 24-pounder ships—and according to the statement of Lieutenant McDougall of the *Leander*, we have seen that officers of the English flagship actually supposed that the ship they were chasing carried 32-pounders on the main deck—renders it exceedingly probable that Sir George did not dare to detach the *Acasta* after the *Cyane* (a supposed 44-gun American frigate) without sending the *Newcastle* to aid her; and as this would have left the *Leander* alone to cope with the two remaining American 44-gun frigates, as the *Constitution* and *Levant* were supposed to be, Sir George determined to

keep his vessels within supporting distance of one another. Ten years afterward, on being reminded of this chase, Sir George Collier committed suicide.

In this brilliant cruise Captain Stewart proved himself an officer of rare ability. His action with the *Cyane* and the *Levant*, and his masterly escape from the British squadron, called for all the qualities of a great commander, while his unhesitating attack on what appeared, in the heavy weather, to be two frigates, the beautiful style in which the *Constitution* was put through the most difficult manœuvres and the neatness with which he captured a superior force, have ranked him as one of the most remarkable naval officers of his day. Congress awarded him a sword and a gold medal. Lieutenant Hoffman, in his official report, commended the gallantry of Midshipmen Joseph Cross, James W. Delany and James F. Curtis. The colors of the *Cyane* and the *Levant* are preserved in Naval Institute Building at Annapolis.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EAST INDIA SQUADRON.

No better evidence can be had of the dread the English felt for the American frigate than the manner in which the blockading squadron off Boston hastened across the Atlantic to the coast of Africa in chase of the *Constitution* as soon as it was known that *Old Ironsides* had got to sea. Satisfied that the most effective way of attacking the enemy was by sending light squadrons into distant seas, and encouraged by the success of the *Essex* in the Pacific Ocean, the Government decided to send the 44-gun frigate *President*, Captain Stephen Decatur, and the sloops of war *Peacock*, Captain Lewis Warrington, and *Hornet*, Master-Commandant James Biddle, with the store ship *Tom Bowline*, into the Indian Ocean and to cruise in the East Indies. This was the cruise that had been marked out for the *Constitution*, the *Essex* and the *Hornet* when that squadron sailed from New York in October, 1812. These vessels failed to meet at the appointed rendezvous, so that the plan, so far as the Indian Ocean was concerned, was not carried out, but each ship added new luster to the fame of the navy—the *Constitution* and the *Hornet* sinking the *Java* and the *Peacock*, while the *Essex* made her extraordinary cruise in the Pacific.

The port of New York, in which Captain Decatur's vessels lay, was so closely blockaded, however, that it was impossible for the squadron to get to sea, and it became necessary for the ships to sail singly. Leaving instructions for the *Peacock* (new) and the *Hornet* to rendezvous at Tristan d'Acunha, Captain Decatur, on

the night of January 14th, 1815, left his anchorage off Staten Island and stood down the Narrows. For twenty-four hours a heavy gale had been blowing, which, it was thought, had driven the blockading ships to the south, and Captain Decatur had strong hopes of getting to sea before they could regain their cruising ground. The night was dark and boisterous, and everything seemed to favor his attempt; but at 8 P. M., as the *President* was rapidly approaching Sandy Hook, the pilot, owing to the absence of beacon lights, ran the ship aground. Strenuous efforts were made to float the frigate off, but as she was heavily laden for a long cruise, it was nearly two hours before she was again got into deep water. In the mean time she thumped violently on the bar, and was so strained and "hogged" as seriously to impair her sailing qualities and seaworthiness. A portion of her false keel was displaced, her rudder braces were broken, and the ship was otherwise so injured as to render a return to port imperative; but this, owing to the strength and direction of the wind, was impossible, and at 10 P. M. she was forced over the bar.

After running fifty miles along the shore of Long Island, Captain Decatur headed southeast by east, supposing that the enemy would be some distance to the south, and the frigate held this course for the remainder of the night, but in the gray dawn of the following day, Sandy Hook bearing sixty-five miles northwest by west, three sails were discovered not more than two miles ahead, and shortly afterward a fourth loomed up on the weather quarter. These were soon recognized as Captain John Hayes' blockading squadron. Captain Decatur immediately ordered his helm down, hauled close to the wind on the starboard tack and headed for the eastern end of Long Island. The strangers quickly put about in pursuit, and the vessels spread every inch of canvas that would draw. It soon became apparent that the enemy was gaining, and Captain Decatur began to relieve his ship of boats,

spars, cables, anchors and finally provisions, while the sails, from the royals down, were saturated with water so as to hold the wind better. As the *President* still lost ground, her water was pumped out, after which every article that did not pertain to her armament was sacrificed. But in spite of these extreme measures the enemy still crept up. The effects of the injuries that the frigate had sustained while aground were painfully apparent. By 11 A. M. the enemy's leading ship, the *Majestic*, opened fire, but Captain Decatur did not respond, and soon he had the satisfaction of seeing her shot fall short. By 3 P. M. the second of the pursuing ships, the *Endymion*, Captain H. Hope, a 24-pounder 38-gun frigate, had gained so much as to be within long range and was far in advance of her consorts. Two hours later she was on the *President's* starboard quarter, within half-point blank shot, in which position the latter could not bring a gun to bear, neither stern chasers nor quarter guns, while the Englishman kept up a galling fire, and the American commander saw his men falling around him and his ship shattered by every shot, while an overwhelming force was close in his wake.

In such an extremity the alternative was either to surrender or to turn suddenly upon the *Endymion*, destroy or take her by boarding, and, after scuttling the *President* and transferring her crew to the swifter *Endymion*, make sail and escape before the other ships came up. The latter plan was bold and hazardous, for, even if they should succeed in capturing the *Endymion*, the time required might enable the other vessels to close. But to the spirited Decatur any attempt, however forlorn, was preferable to surrender. Accordingly a howitzer, heavily loaded, was pointed down the hatchway, so as to put a hole through the bottom of the ship when the time came for abandoning her, then, assembling his men, most of whom had served under him many years, Captain Decatur ad-

dressed them: "My lads, that ship is coming up with us. As our ship won't sail, we'll go on board of them, every man and boy of us, and carry her into New York. All I ask of you is to follow me. This is a favorite ship of the country. If we allow her to be taken, we shall be deserted by our wives and sweethearts. What! let such a ship as this go for nothing! 'Twould break the heart of every pretty girl in New York." The daring of their leader found a ready response in the breasts of the men, and with one accord they gave three hearty cheers and returned to their guns. Captain Decatur now waited until the *Endymion* was close upon him, when he suddenly put the *President* about so as to run alongside. But either the cheers from the American crew or former experience with American frigates rendered the British commander exceedingly cautious, for the moment he saw the *President* coming around he also went about so as to maintain his distance. At dusk, Captain Decatur ran off the Englishman's port beam and opened a tremendous fire, still hoping to disable him before the other ships came up. The two frigates soon came within musket-shot, and one of the *President's* shot crashed through the enemy's quarter-deck and entered the deck below.

It was not long before Captain Decatur lost the valuable services of his first lieutenant, Fitz Henry Babbitt, who was standing near the wardroom hatch when a 32-pound shot struck him just below the right knee, and, falling down the hatchway into the wardroom, he fractured his leg in two places and his skull. He survived his injuries nearly two hours with great fortitude, and to the last calmly dictated his parting messages, requesting that his watch might be sent to his brother, and taking from his neck the miniature of the young lady to whom he was engaged, desired that it be delivered to his mother. Second-Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick was now ordered on deck to take the trum-

pet, and as this officer was walking aft in compliance with the order he passed Lieutenant Archibald Hamilton, and, being a fellow-townsman, asked him in a cheerful manner how he was getting along. Before a reply could be made Lieutenant Hamilton was cut nearly in two by a 24-pound shot. He "was a young officer of great merit, equally distinguished by beauty of person and the rarest excellence of character, and whose cheerful, happy temperament endeared him to all who knew him. Alike the pride of the ball-room and of the quarter-deck, he carried everywhere the same sunny and joyous demeanor. 'Carry on, boys! carry on!' was the favorite exclamation with which in festive scenes he was wont to excite his companions to mirth, and in scenes of danger to exertion. He was in the act of uttering this animating exclamation when he was killed." He was the son of Paul Hamilton, ex-Secretary of the Navy. He had been in the *United States–Macedonian* fight, and had the honor of bearing the colors of the British frigate to Washington.

Captain Decatur himself, while standing on a shot-box to get a better view of the enemy, was struck on the chest by a huge splinter and thrown senseless to the deck. This was a blow that fell upon every man in the ship, for Decatur had become the idol of his crew, and when it was rumored that he was wounded the greatest anxiety was expressed. Decatur, however, soon recovered, and, declining all assistance, walked back to his station, and at sight of him the men gave three cheers. But soon afterward Captain Decatur was again wounded, this time by a splinter that struck his head and covered his face with blood. He refused to go below, and continued in command.

In the mean time the British frigate had been suffering heavily, and by 8 P. M. her fire had perceptibly diminished, and there were intervals of several minutes before she discharged a gun. Never was a ship's battery served better than the *President's* on this occa-



Captain Decatur wounded.

sion, and never was the fire from the marines more accurate than that of those under Lieutenant Levi Twiggs. Decatur described it as "incomparable." The Englishman's rigging was completely wrecked and nearly every gun in his port battery had been disabled. About this time Lieutenant Edward F. Howell, who commanded the fifth division of guns on the *President's* quarterdeck, remarked to Midshipman Emmett, as he leaned over the side so as to get a better view of the *Endymion*, "Well, we've whipped that ship, at any rate." Just then Howell saw the flash of a gun from the bow of the British frigate, and quickly added, "No, there she is—" and before he could utter the word "again" a grapeshot struck his forehead, killing him instantly. This was the last gun the *Endymion* fired.

Finding that the *Endymion* was incapable of making further resistance, and that the other British vessels were drawing near, Captain Decatur, at 8.30 P. M., resumed his course under all sail, from royal studding sails down. In doing this the *President* for some time exposed herself to a raking fire from the *Endymion*, but the latter did not discharge a single gun, showing how completely she was disabled, and that she must have surrendered had not the *President* been compelled to abandon her. The running action with the *Endymion* had lasted two hours and a half, and, although the *President* had been severely injured in her rigging, Captain Decatur was still in hopes of effecting his escape under cover of night. At 9 P. M. it clouded over, and, availing himself of this, he changed his course to the south, hoping that by this means he could elude his pursuers. The frigate continued on this tack for two hours with no signs of the enemy, and all began to congratulate themselves on their escape, but at half past eleven the clouds blew away, and revealed the English ships in the bright moonlight. Unfortunately, they had been able to follow the chase by getting occasional glimpses of her through the clouds. In his offi-

cial report Captain Decatur said: "Two fresh ships of the enemy, the 38-gun frigates *Pomone* and *Tenedos*, had come up. The *Pomone* had opened her fire on the port bow, within musket shot, the other, about two cables' length astern, taking a raking position on our quarter, and the rest, with the exception of the *Endymion*, within gunshot. Thus situated, with about one fifth of my crew killed and wounded, my ship crippled, and a more than fourfold force opposed to me, without a chance of escape, I deemed it my duty to surrender." But "the *Pomone* fired a second broadside,"[1] which killed a "considerable number" of men in the *President*, upon which Captain Decatur cried: "She means to sink us! To your quarters, my lads, and renew your fire!" Before this could be done, however, the *Tenedos* ranged up on the *President's* starboard bow, and, hailing, was answered: "The American frigate *President*. We have surrendered." Captain Parker, of the *Tenedos*, immediately sent a boat and took possession at 11.30 P. M.

In this chase the *President* sustained a loss of twenty-four killed and fifty-six wounded; three of her five lieutenants, Babbitt, Hamilton and Howell, being among the killed. The remains of these young officers, on the following day, were sewed in heavily shotted canvas, and, being wrapped in American flags, were placed on a gun slide in the lee gangway. Captain Decatur read the burial service, and the bodies were consigned to the sea. Among the wounded were Midshipmen Richard Dale (son of Richard Dale, of the *Bonhomme Richard*), who lost a leg, and Benjamin Brewster, Sailing-Master James Rogers and Master's-Mate Parker. The loss in the *Endymion* was eleven killed and fourteen wounded.[2] This disparity in killed and wounded was owing to the Americans directing

[1] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 240.

[2] Official report of Captain H. Hope, of the *Endymion*.

their fire chiefly at the Englishman's rigging, with a view of throwing him out of the chase. As the *President* had been captured by a squadron and not by a single ship, Captain Decatur surrendered his sword to the senior officer, Captain John Hayes, of the *Majestic*, who returned it, saying that "he felt proud in returning the sword of an officer who had defended his ship so nobly." Captain Decatur especially commended the gallantry of Lieutenants Shubrick and John Gallagher, Lieutenant Twiggs, of the marines, Midshipman Robert B. Randolph and Henry Robinson, who was serving as a volunteer chaplain. Among the midshipmen in the *President* in this affair were William Carmichael Nicholson (afterward commodore, then but fifteen years old, son of Captain John Nicholson, of the navy during the Revolution), and Irvine Shubrick, brother of Second-Lieutenant John Templer Shubrick.

Some English writers have endeavored to show that this was a single-ship action between the *President* and the *Endymion*, but their own records do not support this view, as the following will show. Captain Brenton, in his Naval History of England, says: "It would be unfair to the memory of that excellent man, Captain Decatur, to say this was an equal action. It might, perhaps, have ended in a drawn battle had not the *Pomone* decided the contest." Rear-Admiral H. Hotham, in reporting the capture to Vice-Admiral Cochrane, admits that the *President* was captured by a squadron, when he says: "I have the honor to acquaint you with the capture of the United States ship *President*, on the 15th instant, by the following force, viz.: the *Majestic*, Captain Hayes; the *Tenedos*, Captain Hyde Parker; the *Endymion*, Captain Hope; the *Pomone*, Captain Lumley—which I had collected off the bar of New York, under the direction of Captain Hayes." Several years afterward while some English officers were discussing the chase at a dinner at which Admiral Cochrane was present, and were endeavoring

to show that the *President* was captured by the *Endymion* alone, the bluff old admiral bluntly remarked, "the *President* was completely mobbed."

On the arrival of the *President* with her captors at the Bermudas, the Gazette of that place published an article in which it was intimated that the *President* was not captured by the squadron, but by the *Endymion* alone. Through the highly honorable interference of the governor and the British officers of the squadron the editor was compelled to retract. The editor of the Bermuda Gazette, in his paper of March 15, 1815, further said that Captain Decatur had concealed sixty-five of his men in the *President's* hold for the purpose of rising on the prize crew and recovering the ship. These published reports so incensed the American officers that Midshipman Randolph, of the *President*, on the following day met the editor in King's Square and gave him a severe caning. Captain Decatur, in a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, says: "I have the honor to inclose you my parole, by which you will perceive the British admit that the *President* was captured by the squadron."

Although this affair can not be considered in the light of a single-ship action between the *President* and the *Endymion*, yet a comparison of their forces will be interesting. The *President* carried thirty long 24-pounders and twenty-two short 42-pounders—in all, fifty-two guns, with seven hundred and sixty-five actual pounds of metal to the broadside. The *Endymion* mounted thirty long 24-pounders and twenty short 32-pounders—in all, fifty guns, aggregating six hundred and eighty pounds of metal to the broadside. The latter ship, as we have seen, was compelled to drop out of the chase, while the *Pomone* and the *Tenedos* completed the capture. Two days afterward, in a heavy gale, the *Endymion* was obliged to throw overboard her quarter-deck and forecastle guns, at the same time cutting away her bowsprit, fore and main masts and mizzen

topmast. The *President* in the same gale lost her lower masts and several of her guns.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
President:	52	765	24	56	80	Time
Endymion:	50	680	11	14	25	2h. 30m.

Not having heard of the *President's* capture, Captain Warrington, of the *Peacock*, with the *Hornet* and the *Tom Bowline*, sailed from New York on the 22d of January, eight days after the departure of Captain Decatur. The three vessels passed the bar about daylight, and, although a hostile squadron was descried to the south, a favorable wind enabled them to clear it and get to sea. A few days out, the *Hornet*, Master-Commandant Biddle, became separated from the other vessels and made directly for Tristan d'Acunha, the rendezvous appointed by Captain Decatur, and arrived there on the 23d of March. As Captain Biddle (having been promoted to that rank February 28, 1815) was about to anchor off the northern end of the island, a sail was discovered, and the *Hornet* was immediately put under topsails and stood out to reconnoiter. The stranger rapidly came down before the wind, and at 1.40 P. M., being nearly within musket-shot, hauled her wind on the starboard tack, hoisted an English flag and fired a gun, upon which the *Hornet* promptly luffed up, showed her colors and responded with a broadside. For fifteen minutes the vessels maintained a heavy cannonading; the *Hornet*, using star-and-bar shot, soon crippled the enemy's rigging, and this was followed up with round and grape shot. From the time the firing began the vessels had been drawing closer together, until at 1.55 P. M. the enemy made an attempt to board, and succeeded in passing his bowsprit between the *Hornet's* main and mizzen rigging on the starboard quarter, and had ample opportunity to gain the *Hornet's* deck, but for some reason he did not

carry out his design. The American seamen immediately went aft and begged for permission to board, but Captain Biddle, aware of the advantage he had gained, was unwilling to relinquish it. At this moment a heavy swell caused the vessels to separate, and carried away the *Hornet's* mizzen shrouds, stern davits and spanker boom, while the enemy lost his bowsprit and swung around on the *Hornet's* port quarter. Immediately afterward the Englishman's foremast fell, the wreck covering the port guns so that they could not be used. The *Hornet* then wore round to bring her fresh broadside into play, when, at 2.02 P. M., the surviving officer of the British brig, Lieutenant James M'Donald, called out that they had surrendered. Captain Biddle ordered his men to cease firing, and, going to the taffrail, asked if they had struck; but by way of answer two British seamen fired at him and at the man at the wheel. "Captain Biddle was struck on the chin, and the ball, passing round the neck, went off through the cape of his surtout, wounding him severely but not dangerously; the man at the wheel escaped, but the Englishmen who fired did not, for they were observed by two of our marines, who shot them dead."[1] It was with the greatest difficulty the American crew was restrained from firing again. The enemy now hailed the second time, saying that he had surrendered, and that the ship was the British brig-sloop *Penguin*, Captain James Dickinson.

The *Penguin* was shorter than the *Hornet* in deck measurement by two feet, but she had a greater length of keel, greater breadth of beam, thicker sides and higher bulwarks. The latter carried eighteen short 32-pounders and two long 12-pounders; total, twenty guns, with two hundred and seventy-nine pounds actual weight of metal to the broadside. The *Penguin* carried sixteen short 32-pounders, two long 12-pounders

[1] Private journal of an officer in the *Peacock*.

and one short 12-pounder, with swivels on the capstan and in the tops,[1] making nineteen guns, with two hundred and seventy-four pounds of metal to the broadside. Out of her complement of one hundred and thirty-two men the *Hornet* lost one killed and eleven wounded, among the latter being Captain Biddle and Lieutenant Conner. The *Penguin's* loss was ten killed and twenty-eight wounded,[2] among the former being Captain Dickinson and one of the boatswains who had served under Nelson. One hundred and eighteen prisoners were taken from her, to which add the number they admit as killed, viz., ten (Captain Biddle reports fourteen), and we get the *Penguin's* crew one hundred and twenty-eight. Of these, twelve men were supernumerary marines from the 74-gun ship *Medway*. Captain Biddle spoke in highest terms of the gallantry of Lieutenants David Conner, John T. Newton, Isaac Mayo, Acting-Lieutenant W. L. Brownlow, of the marines, and Sailing-Master Edward Romey.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Crew.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.	
Hornet:	20	279	132	1	11	12	Time 22m.
Penguin:	19	274	128	10	28	38	

The officers of the *Penguin* relate that in the action a 32-pound shot came in at an after port, carried away "six legs," killed the powder-boy of the division, capsized the opposite gun on the starboard side, passed through another port, and, spending itself on the sea beyond, "sank in sullen silence." Each of the English midshipmen lost a leg. The *Penguin* had been dispatched by Vice-Admiral Charles Tyler, of the 74-gun ship *Medway*, to capture the American privateer *Young Wasp*, which had recently been off the island, and, after capturing a richly laden Indiaman and land-

[1] Official report of Captain Biddle. James, vol. vi. p. 261, says "16 carronades, 32-pounders, and two sixes."

[2] Official report of Lieutenant M'Donough.

ing the prisoners, had sailed away. The prisoners brought the news of the *Young Wasp's* exploit to Vice-Admiral Tyler, who detached twelve marines from his own ship to assist in taking the audacious privateer. Special instructions were given to Captain Dickenson as to the way he should capture the *Young Wasp*, and emphasis was laid on the desirability of getting "close enough." Fearing that he might frighten off the supposed privateer, Captain Dickenson approached the *Hornet* head on, so as not to reveal his broadside. At the time of her surrender the *Penguin* "was a perfect wreck";[1] "she was completely riddled by our shot, her foremast and bowsprit both gone, and her mainmast so crippled as to be incapable of being secured,"[2] and, after taking out a few stores, the Americans scuttled her. Captain Biddle reported that the *Hornet* "did not receive a single round shot in her hull, nor any material wound in her spars. The rigging and sails were very much cut; but, having bent a new suit of sails and knotted and secured our rigging, we are now completely ready in all respects for any service."

Scarcely had the prisoners been secured when two strange sails hove in sight, and as they rapidly bore down they were made out to be vessels of war. Captain Biddle hastily cleared for action and stood out to reconnoiter, but after an exchange of signals he discovered them to be the *Peacock* and the *Tom Bowline*. The latter was now made a cartel and sent to Rio de Janeiro with the prisoners. After the action the *Peacock* and the *Hornet* remained at Tristan d'Acunha, in the vain hope of meeting the *President*, until April, when Captains Warrington and Biddle determined to cruise in the Indian Ocean without their flagship, and, having aboard supplies for an extended voyage, they set sail, on the 13th of April, for the East Indies.

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[1] Official report of Lieutenant M'Donald.

[2] Official report of Captain Biddle.

After doubling the Cape of Good Hope they proceeded on an uneventful cruise until the 27th of April, when, at seven o'clock on the morning of this day, in latitude 38° 30′ South, longitude 33° East, a large sail was made out to the southeast. Chase was immediately given, but, as the wind continued light throughout the day, it was nearly sunset before the hull of the stranger could be seen. She was now thought to be an East India merchantman, and the Americans had reason to congratulate themselves. An officer in the *Hornet* wrote: "The seamen declared they would have the berth deck carpeted with East India silk, supposing her an Indiaman from India; while the officers, under the impression she was from England, were making arrangements how we should dispose of the money, porter, cheese, etc. We were regretting that our ship did not sail faster, as the *Peacock* would certainly capture her first and would take out many of the best and most valuable articles before we should get up."

During the night and the following morning it was calm, the chase all this time standing northward, but about noon of the 28th, a breeze springing up from the north, the *Peacock* and the *Hornet* set studding sails on both sides and rapidly came down on the stranger. At 2.45 P. M., Captain Biddle, who was six miles astern of his consort, noticed that the *Peacock* seemed a little shy of the chase, and, believing that she was an unusually large and heavily armed Indiaman, and that the *Peacock* was waiting for the *Hornet* to come up so that they might attack together, Captain Biddle took in his starboard studding sails and ran down to his consort. Captain Warrington was more cautious than the American privateersman, who ran down on a ship of the line under the impression that she was a merchantship, and ordered her to strike, and who, when the Englishman ran out his guns, gracefully submitted to the inevitable by saying, "Well, if you won't surrender, I will."

At 3.22 P. M., when the *Hornet* was eight miles from the stranger, the *Peacock* signaled "a ship of the line" and turned to escape, while the stranger wore in pursuit. Upon this the American sloops separated, and the enemy selected the *Hornet*. Fully sensible of the honor thus bestowed upon him, Captain Biddle made every effort to show "a clean pair of heels." He took in all his studding sails and hauled close to the wind, but before sunset the stranger proved herself to be a remarkably fast sailer and very weatherly. By 9 P. M. she had gained considerably, and as she could keep the chase in sight all night, it became necessary to lighten the *Hornet*. Accordingly, Captain Biddle threw overboard twelve tons of kentledge, part of his shot, some of the heavy spars, cut away the sheet anchor and cable and started the wedges of the mast.

By 2 A. M. of the 29th the enemy had gained still more, having now reached a position rather forward of the *Hornet's* lee beam, so that Captain Biddle was compelled to go about. By daylight the stranger was within gunshot on the lee quarter, and at 7 A. M. she hoisted English colors and opened from her bow guns. As the shot went over the *Hornet*, Captain Biddle was compelled to part with his remaining anchors, cables, launch, six guns, a quantity of shot, and every heavy article that could possibly be spared. This had the desired effect, and soon he had the satisfaction of seeing the enemy's shot gradually fall short. But at 11 A. M. the Englishman began to creep up again and soon reopened with effect. Captain Biddle now threw overboard all but one of his guns, nearly all his shot, all the extra spars, muskets, cutlasses, forge and bell, cut away the topgallant forecastle, and literally stripped his ship, both above and between decks, of every movable article, while the men were ordered to lie down on the quarter-deck in order to trim the ship and increase her speed. But still the enemy kept within range.

"At this time the shot and shells were whistling



Chase of the Hornet by the Cornwallis.

about our ears, and not a person on board had the most distant idea that there was a possibility of escape. We all packed our things and waited until the enemy's shot would compel us to heave to and surrender. Many of our men had been impressed and imprisoned for years in their horrible service and hated them and their nation with the most deadly animosity, while the rest of the crew, horror-struck with the narration of the sufferings of their shipmates who had been in the power of the English, and now equally flushed with rage, joined heartily in execrating the present authors of our misfortune. Captain Biddle mustered the men and told them he was pleased with their conduct during the chase, and hoped still to perceive that propriety of conduct which had always marked their character and that of the American tar generally; that we might soon expect to be captured, etc. Not a dry eye was to be seen at the mention of the capture of the poor little *Hornet*."[1]

The stranger continued his cannonading, but owing to his "unskillful firing"[2] only three shot came aboard the *Hornet*. One struck the jib-boom, another struck the starboard bulwark just forward of the gangway, and a third fell on the main deck immediately over the head of one of the men who had been disabled in the action with the *Penguin*, where he was lying in his cot very ill with his wounds. The shot was near coming through the deck, and it threw innumerable splinters all around him and struck down a small paper, the American Ensign, which he had hoisted over his head. The wind, which up to this time had been unfavorable for the *Hornet*, now shifted to the southeast, and then freshened up from the west. This, by sunset, enabled the *Hornet* to put the enemy four miles astern westward, and during the following night the weather be-

[1] Private journal of one of the *Hornet's* officers.

[2] James' History of the British Navy, vol. vi, p. 266.

came cloudy and squally. Occasionally the ship of the line was seen, but by daylight of the 30th she was fully twelve miles behind. At 9.30 A. M. she took in her studding sails, and by 11 A. M. she had faded from view, and the *Hornet* made for the United States. The stranger was afterward known to have been the British ship of the line *Cornwallis*, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir George Burlton.

After dropping the *Cornwallis* out of sight, the *Peacock* continued her cruise in the Indian Ocean, and caused great damage to British commerce. At four o'clock in the afternoon of June 30th, while in the Straits of Sunda, she fell in with the British cruiser *Nautilus*, Lieutenant Charles Boyce, and on coming within hail Lieutenant Boyce asked if the Americans knew that peace had been declared, which was answered in the negative, and, having no assurance of it further than the Englishman's statement, Captain Warrington insisted on a surrender. As the *Nautilus* was near the fort of Anjiers and had her crew at quarters, Captain Warrington had reason to suspect that this might be a *ruse* on the part of the British commander to escape from the *Peacock* and gain the cover of the fort. Just at this moment several men from the fort boarded the *Peacock*, but "very improperly omitted mentioning that peace existed,"[1] and, as the Americans were in momentary expectation of an engagement, the men were hurried below and secured. A gun was then fired at the *Nautilus* to induce her to surrender. This brought out an entire broadside from the brig, to which the *Peacock* responded, killing six and wounding eight men, upon which the *Nautilus* struck. No injury was sustained by the *Peacock*. The prize carried ten short 18-pounders and four long 9-pounders—in all, fourteen guns, with one hundred and eight pounds of metal to the broadside, and had a crew of thirty-nine

[1] Official report of Captain Warrington.

European officers and seamen and forty marines and lascars; the total on board, including some European invalid soldiers, being about one hundred.[1] Lieutenant Boyce received a grapeshot wound at the first broadside, and soon afterward a 32-pound shot shattered his right knee joint and splintered his thigh bone. His first lieutenant, Robert Mayston, was also wounded. The *Nautilus* was severely damaged; her bends on the starboard side were shivered from the fore chains aft, and the bulwarks were much injured from the chesstree aft, while the lower masts and tiller were injured, and the boom and mainsail were perforated with grapeshot. The launch and cutter were cut to pieces, two guns were disabled, and the iron stock, ring and fluke of the sheet anchor were shot away. Four 32-pound shot were taken out of her, one of them being lodged under the counter, near the water line.

Comparative force and loss.

	Guns.	Lbs.	Killed.	Wounded.	Total.
Peacock:	22	309	0	0	0
Nautilus:	14	108	6	8	14

It is reasonable to suppose that Captain Warrington, at such a distance from home, must have been in doubt as to the truth of the rumors of peace. Had they been false, he would have been regarded as being very "simple" in allowing the *Nautilus* to escape his grasp. When the rumors of peace were confirmed he carefully repaired the *Nautilus* and returned her to the English. The *Peacock* arrived in New York on the 30th of October, having secured five thousand dollars in specie, besides many valuable cargoes.

In the autumn of 1814 the Government fitted out two flying squadrons to cruise in the West Indies. The first of the squadrons, under command of Captain Porter, consisted of the schooners or brigantines *Fire-*

[1] C. R. Low's History of the Indian Navy, vol. i, p. 285.

fly (flagship); *Spark*, Master-Commandant Gamble; *Torch*, Master-Commandant Chauncey; *Spitfire*, Captain Cassin; and *Flambeau*, Master-Commandant J. B. Nicholson. The second squadron, under command of Captain Perry, consisted of the brigs *Boxer*, Lieutenant John Porter; *Saranac*, Lieutenant Elton; *Chippewa*, Lieutenant G. Campbell Read; and *Escape* or *Prometheus*, Lieutenant Joseph J. Nicholson. The squadron was ordered to destroy every prize that fell into its hands, and not to attempt to bring any captures into port except under extraordinary circumstances. But the war terminated before the vessels could put to sea, the treaty being ratified February 18, 1815.

Commenting on the Treaty of Ghent, the London Times of December 30, 1814, says: "We have retired from the combat with the stripes yet bleeding on our backs. Even yet, however, if we could but close the war with some great naval triumph the reputation of our maritime greatness might be partially restored. But to say that it has not hitherto suffered in the estimation of all Europe, and, what is worse, of America herself, is to belie common sense and universal experience. 'Two or three of our ships have struck to a force vastly inferior!' No; not two or three, but many on the ocean and whole squadrons on the lakes; and the numbers are to be viewed with relation to the comparative magnitude of the two navies. Scarcely is there an American ship of war which has not to boast a victory over the British flag; scarcely one British ship in thirty or forty that has beaten an American. With the bravest seamen and the most powerful navy in the world, we retire from the contest when the balance of defeat is so heavy against us." And this was written before the Times had heard of the capture of the *Cyane* and the *Levant* by the *Constitution*, the disabling of the *Endymion* by the *President*, or the brilliant victory of the *Hornet* over the *Penguin*.

APPENDIX.

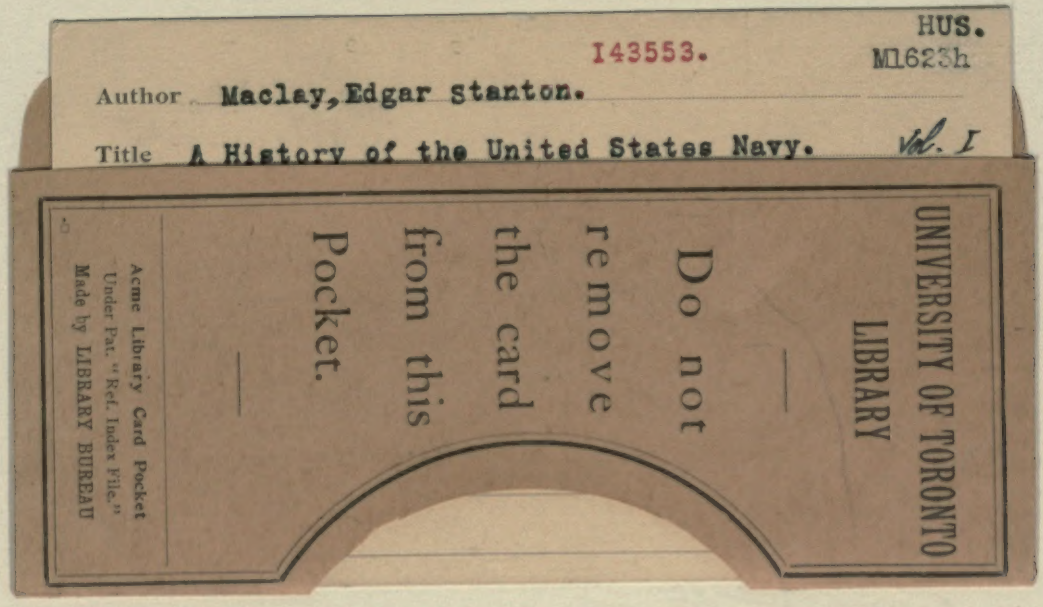
REUBEN JAMES.

Reuben James was a typical American tar. He was born in Delaware, entered upon a sailor's life when a boy, was captured in 1797 by a French privateer and suffered great hardships. On his liberation he shipped in the *Constellation* in 1799, and was in the battles between that frigate and the *Insurgent* and the *Vengeance*. In 1804 he sailed for the Mediterranean in the 44-gun frigate *United States*, and was one of the first to volunteer under Lieutenant Decatur when he destroyed the *Philadelphia* in the harbor of Tripoli, and he remained under Decatur's command in all the fierce hand-to-hand encounters off Tripoli. When he recovered from his wounds, Decatur asked him what he could do for him. At that time Reuben was a quarter gunner, and taking off his hat he said, after a pause: "Nothing, sir, but to let somebody else hand out the hammocks to the men when they are piped down."

He followed Decatur from the *Enterprise* to the *Constitution* and to the *Congress*. He crossed the Atlantic in a gunboat commanded by Master-Commandant James Lawrence, when he again joined his old commander. He was in the *United States* during her action with the *Macedonian*, and was in the *President* when she was captured by a British squadron in January, 1815, on which occasion he was three times wounded before he would allow himself to be carried below. He followed Decatur to the Algerian war in

1815, and was in the new 44-gun frigate *Guerrière* when she captured the *Mashouda* off the coast of Africa. In the long peace that followed he was constantly cruising in United States vessels in the Mediterranean, the West Indies and the Pacific Ocean, and, to use his own expression, he had seen "ten fights and as many scrimmages." In the autumn of 1836 he went to Washington to get a pension, and as he was suffering from an old musket-ball wound, his limb was amputated in order to save his life. With characteristic indifference to danger or suffering, the old tar, when informed that the operation was about to be performed, merely remarked that it was not quite ship-shape to put him under jury masts until in harbor, and the day after, when his symptoms became alarming, his only request was that the surgeon, Dr. Foltz, should "ease him off handsomely." Reuben was a heavy drinker, and when it became necessary to administer stimulants he was asked whether he preferred brown stout or brandy toddy, and replied, "Doctor, suppose you give me both." But Reuben's time had not come yet. He survived several years, although his body was riddled with bullets and scarred with saber cuts.

END OF VOLUME I.


I43553.
HUS.
M1623h
Author Maclay, Edgar Stanton.
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